How to Deal with Damp and Mould



Areas of damp and mould are very common in flats, especially during the winter months.

Signs of damp and mould include:

- Growth of mould on walls, ceilings and other surfaces
- Curtains and clothes becoming stained with mildew
- A damp, musty smell
- Condensation visible on the inside of windows
- Condensation visible on walls, or doors, especially in bathrooms

The most common cause of damp and mould is a build-up of condensation, but it can sometimes occur or be exacerbated by a leak, which is unresolved. Regular checks of the plumbing under sinks and baths, and behind washing machines and dishwashers can help rule this out.





Condensation

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air comes into contact with a cooler surface. Water vapour is produced from normal everyday living such as:

- Cooking
- Washing and drying clothes
- Bathing and showering
- Even just breathing

Moisture can also be drawn in from the structure of the building. Flats are often particularly prone to condensation, but it can affect any property.



Preventing or controlling condensation

Condensation can be prevented and controlled by adjustments to the property and by changes in lifestyle

1 Increase ventilation

- Ensure that extractor fans (especially in kitchens and bathrooms) are performing well and are used correctly
- Extractor fans can now be controlled by a humidistat, which automatically switches them on when there is a high level of water vapour present and turns the fan off when this has dissipated
- Use trickle vents in windows (where present) or open windows more often
- If you own a leasehold property you will probably need consent from your freeholder for alterations such as these

2 Maintaining a consistent temperature

- Leave heating on at a low temperature to prevent big dips and spikes in the heating of the property

3 Increase insulation

- Install double glazed windows
- Increase insulation in lofts or walls, where practical

4 Lifestyle changes which help prevent condensation

- Keep bathroom doors shut and windows slightly open when showering
- Avoid the drying of clothes on radiators/drying racks
- Pull wardrobes and furniture away from walls slightly to allow air to circulate
- Avoid the over filling of cupboards and wardrobes
- When cooking, use lids on pans and avoid boiling anything for too long
- Check nothing is obstructing air vents / extractors

5 Controlling condensation/ mould

- Wipe down surfaces affected by condensation regularly
- Mould can be removed by washing the surface with a fungicidal wash or disinfectant
- Before repainting, the area should be stained block and/or use fungicidal paint
- Buy a dehumidifier

Next steps

Be aware that mould can grow very quickly in the right conditions so don't assume a severe problem has been going on a long time.

If there is no improvement after taking the steps above, contact Neil Douglas and ask them to check external areas, which may be contributing to the damp, such as blocked gutters, over hanging trees, or cracked render.

If all other causes have been ruled out, consider instructing a damp specialist or surveyor to advise.

Further questions or queries

If you have any questions or queries that are not covered by this guidance please do get in touch. Further advice on various topics can be found on our website at www.neildouglas.co.uk/advice

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