SNELLERS
ESTATE AGENTS

GUIDE TO DAMP AND MOULD

HOW TO PREVENT DAMP AND MOULD

Damp and mould in the home are frustrating issues that are caused for a number of reasons, but are more common in the colder months of the year. Condensation forms when water droplets created by warm air hit a cold surface. This causes surface dampness which can lead to mould growth.

Whilst we are here to help you with every aspect of maintenance in your property, making sure your home is free of mould is also your responsibility to manage as a tenant. The average person breathes out approximately two litres of water every 24 hours and an average family of four will generate nearly 14 litres of water a day during cooking, washing, drying clothes and bathing. Preventing damp and mould is much easier than you might think. This quick guide offers simple solutions to minimise and deal with small damp and mould issues.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR LEAKS

Leaky window frames, pipework, walls, and doors are common sources of moisture. If you see a leak, you should report it to your Landlord or Property Manager as soon as possible so we can deal with the problem swiftly. This will stop the issue from turning into a bigger problem and prevent causing further damage to the property. In the meantime, use a bucket or bowl to collect any drips and keep surfaces dry with a mop or towel. Please note that rising damp does not generally result in the growth of black mould.

DRYING CLOTHES IN A VENTILATED ROOM

Do not dry clothes on radiators. The vapour turns into moisture in the air and is then circulated around the rooms. This then gathers on walls, windows and other fabrics in the home and can be a mould risk. Instead, dry clothes on an airer in a well-ventilated room. Open a window or use a dehumidifier to minimise the spread of moisture indoors, or alternatively, use a heated airer.

KEEP DOORS CLOSED

Keep bathroom or kitchen doors closed when having a shower or bath, or when cooking. This will prevent moisture from spreading to other parts of the property. Keeping lids on pans whilst cooking will also help.

USE EXTRACTOR FANS

If you have an extractor fan in the bathroom, always make sure it is running when you're having a shower or bath. If you have an extractor fan in the kitchen, you should also use it to disperse moisture and cooking smells. In the absence of extractor fans, open a window when you cook or bathe to allow the moisture to escape.

REGULARLY AIR YOUR PROPERTY

Open windows (or trickle vents) regularly to make sure your property is well-ventilated. Even when it's cold, moisture gathers in the home so opening the window allows some of this moisture to escape.

USE A DEHUMIDIFIER OR DAMP TRAP

Using a dehumidifier is a great way to take the moisture out of the air, especially if you dry your clothes indoors. Disposable damp traps can also work well but over time, you might find it more economical to use an electric dehumidifier.

WIPE AWAY CONDENSATION

Cleaning the condensation from windows and frames every day will minimise the spread of black mould. You can simply use a rag or towel to wipe away condensation.

GROW MOISTURE-ABSORBING PLANTS

Some plants can absorb moisture and pollution from the air such as Peace Lilies, Tillandsia, Palms, and Ferns are all moisture absorbers.

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NOT OVERSTUFFING YOUR PROPERTY

Avoid pushing furniture against the walls, radiators, or overfilling wardrobes as this can cause damp and mould to grow and spread. Check behind furniture regularly for signs of damp or mould developing.

TURN ON YOUR HEATING

Keeping your heating at a constant room temperature between 18-20 degrees can help avoid cold spots, dry out damp and lower the chances of getting mould. It will also help prevent pipes from freezing.

Before the winter months, we recommend that you turn on your central heating and run it for a few hours to identify any potential issues. Radiators may also need to be bled to remove any trapped air which can prevent your heating system from working properly.

If you would like more advice relating to energy costs, you can find help and support at: https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/getting-help-if-you-cant-afford-your-energy-bills

HOW TO CLEAN DAMP AND MOULD SPOTS

Damp commonly occurs in the bathroom, on exterior facing walls and around window and door frames. Keep an eye on these problem areas and clean the moisture and damp regularly to minimise your chances of getting black mould or mildew.

If you do see mildew or mould forming, be sure to use gloves and a face mask before cleaning. Ventilate the room well when cleaning mould spots. When working with chemicals, you must always follow manufacturers' instructions. Dispose of any rags that you have used to clean mould after using.

Most black mould spots can simply be wiped off with a damp cloth. Be sure to dry the affected area after and leave the room to ventilate.

If there is a more ingrained mould problem, such as in a bathroom or exterior wall, there are several commercial solutions, such as Polycell's 3 in 1 Mould Killer, HG Mould Spray, or you can try these make at home options:

Make a bleach solution with 1 part bleach to 3 parts water or as advised by the manufacturer.	Use a stiff bristle brush to scrub the area.	Clean off the area then dry it, then leave a window or door open to ventilate.

NATURAL REMEDY	
Add the following to a spray bottle:	Shake well
Half cup of white vinegar	Spray affected area
Half a cup of distilled water	Use a stiff brush to scrub the area
Five drops of tea tree essential oil	Clean off the area, dry it and
Ten drops of clove oil	Ventilate

If, having carried out the above tips, your property is still suffering from damp and mould, or it keeps reappearing, please let your Landlord or Property Manager know as soon as possible. They're on hand to advise and are happy to help.