

# LANDLORD'S GUIDE TO DAMP

HOW TO SPOT AND REDUCE DAMP IN YOUR PROPERTY



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# WHAT IS DAMP?

Dampness is simply unwanted moisture entering your home, either from outside or from everyday activities such as cooking, showering, or drying clothes indoors.

Left unchecked, it can cause damage to your home and belongings, making it feel colder and less pleasant to live in.

## COMMON SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Condensation on windows or walls
- Black mould (often in corners or around windows)
- Peeling paint or wallpaper
- Musty or damp smells
- Cold, damp rooms that don't seem to warm up
- Damp patches or staining





# THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DAMP

Damp problems in your home can cost much more than you first expect. What looks like a small issue can quickly grow into expensive repairs that affect your whole property. The real costs are often hidden until the damage has already spread, making it important to deal with damp as soon as you spot it.



## PROPERTY DAMAGE

Damp can cause structural damage to walls, floors, and ceilings, leading to rotting timber, crumbling plaster, and weakened building materials that compromise the property's integrity.

## COSTLY DECORATION REPAIRS

Persistent damp ruins paintwork, wallpaper, and furnishings.

What starts as small stains can quickly spread, requiring expensive redecoration and replacement of damaged items.

# THE THREE MAIN TYPES OF DAMP

# RISING DAMP

## What it is:

Groundwater rising up through the building's structure due to a failed or absent damp proof course (DPC).

## How to identify it:

- Damp patches or tide-mark stains typically up to 1 meter high on ground floor walls
- Salt staining (white, fluffy deposits)
- Musty smell at ground level
- Peeling paint or wallpaper at the base of walls



## CASE STUDY: THE HIDDEN CASE OF RECURRING DAMP IN A VICTORIAN TERRACE

In one Victorian terrace, the ground-floor walls kept showing damp patches, even after several rounds of redecoration. The problem had been misdiagnosed for years.

When South East Timber and Damp carried out a full investigation, we found that the original damp proof course (DPC) had failed. On top of that, garden renovations had raised the outside ground level above the DPC, letting moisture rise into the walls.

Once properly identified, we were able to recommend the right solution and stop the damp from coming back.

Check it out all our case study [here](#).

# PENETRATING DAMP

## What it is:

Water getting in from outside, such as through leaky gutters, roof tiles, or cracks in walls.

## How to identify it:

- Damp patches that appear during or after rainfall
- Staining that follows the path of water (often diagonal or irregular patterns)
- Damp areas around windows, doors, or roof areas
- Internal dampness that worsens during wet weather

## CASE STUDY: HOW BLOCKED GUTTERS LED TO DAMP INSIDE A 1930S HOME

In a 1930s semi-detached house, South East Timber and Damp were called in after the tenants noticed damp and mould spreading on the internal walls.

Our investigation found the cause: the gutters were blocked, which meant rainwater had been overflowing and soaking the external wall for months. Because it wasn't spotted early, the moisture eventually made its way indoors, leading to mould growth and damaged plaster that needed major repairs.

A simple gutter clean could have prevented it — a great reminder to keep rainwater systems clear and in good working order.

Check it out all our case study [here](#).

# CONDENSATION

## What it is:

Moisture in the air condenses on cold surfaces when warm, humid air meets cooler surfaces.

## How to identify it:

- Water droplets on windows, mirrors, and tiles
- Mould growth in corners, behind furniture, or in poorly ventilated areas
- Damp patches that appear mainly in winter
- Musty smells in bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens
- Black mould around window frames

## CASE STUDY: HOW CONDENSATION CAUSED MOULD IN A MODERN APARTMENT

In one modern apartment we visited, there were serious condensation problems that had led to black mould spreading across walls and behind furniture. The tenant had been drying clothes indoors and rarely opened the windows, so the moisture in the air had nowhere to go.

To fix the problem properly, we had to take a full-property approach. This included:

- Improving ventilation throughout the flat to help moisture escape
- “Warming up” the wall surfaces so condensation wouldn’t form
- Moving furniture away from external walls to let air circulate
- Relocating radiators to colder external walls to keep them dry

Although it took a few changes and some cooperation from the tenant, the issue was fully resolved, and the home became a healthier and more comfortable place to live.

Check it out all our case study [here](#).

# **SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP PREVENT DAMP IN YOUR HOME**



# RISING DAMP

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



Rising damp happens when moisture from the ground travels up into the walls.

Here are some easy ways you can help reduce the risk:

- Look outside: Check that soil, flower beds, or paving aren't built up too high against your walls — they should be at least 15cm (about a brick's height) below the damp-proof course (usually a black line or strip in the wall).
- Report changes: If new patios, garden features, or building work have raised the ground level or are sitting up against the wall, let your landlord or agent know.
- Keep things flowing: Make sure drains near the property are clear, and avoid anything that could cause water to collect and sit against the house walls.

# PENETRATING DAMP

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



Penetrating damp is caused by water getting in from outside, often after heavy rain.

Here's how you can help spot and prevent it:

- Watch the gutters: Keep an eye on gutters and downpipes. If they're overflowing or leaking, it could mean they're blocked or broken. Let your landlord or agent know.
- Clear out leaves: If you're able to safely remove leaves or moss from low gutters or drains, especially in autumn, that can stop water from building up.
- Check the walls: Look out for cracks in the outside walls or around windows and doors — water can get in through even small gaps.
- Look up: If you notice missing roof tiles, broken flashing, or damage around the chimney, report it straight away so it can be fixed before water gets in.

# CONDENSATION

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Condensation is the most common cause of damp in homes, and the good news is, it's also the easiest to manage.

How to reduce condensation in your home:

- Let the moisture out: Open windows a little each day, especially in the kitchen and bathroom, or after drying clothes indoors.
- Use fans if you have them: Bathroom and kitchen extractor fans help remove steam and damp air — use them while cooking or bathing, and leave them running for a while afterwards.
- Keep it warm: Heating your home gently and steadily in cold weather helps stop surfaces from becoming too cold and makes them less likely to attract moisture.
- Dry clothes carefully: If you can't dry clothes outside, open a window nearby and close the door to stop the moisture spreading to other rooms.
- Keep air moving: Leave a small gap between furniture and walls to allow airflow, and don't block air vents or radiators.

A few small changes in daily habits can make a big difference to the comfort and condition of your home.

**WHEN  
PROFESSIONAL  
HELP IS  
ESSENTIAL**



# WARNING SIGNS

While the prevention tips above can help you avoid many damp problems, some issues require professional expertise.

## Warning Signs That Need Professional Attention:

- Persistent damp patches that don't respond to improved ventilation
- Widespread mould growth
- Structural damage or deteriorating building materials

## Why Getting a Professional Assessment Matters

Sometimes what looks like one type of damp can actually be something else, or a mix of problems.

In one case, a tenant thought they had rising damp in their ground-floor flat. But when South East Timber and Damp carried out a professional assessment using specialist tools like moisture meters and thermal imaging, we discovered it wasn't rising damp at all.

The real issue was a leaking waste pipe (causing penetrating damp) combined with poor ventilation, which was leading to condensation and mould.

The tenant had tried to fix it themselves, but because the root cause was different from what they thought, their efforts didn't work. With the right diagnosis, the correct solution could finally be put in place.

The takeaway: It's always worth getting expert advice to make sure you're solving the right problem — and not wasting time, energy, or money.

# WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you've spotted signs of damp in your home and you're not sure what's causing it, don't ignore it. Getting it checked by a professional is the best way to make sure the right fix is put in place.

At South East Timber and Damp, we're here to help. Our team uses specialist tools to:

- Find out exactly what kind of damp it is
- Recommend the best way to fix it
- Carry out the work properly, with guarantees
- Make sure everything meets safety and building standards

**Top tip:** Tell your landlord or estate agent as soon as you notice any signs of damp. Ask for a professional assessment — it's better (and cheaper!) to sort it early, before it gets worse.

## NEED A DAMP CHECK?

Get in touch with South East Timber and Damp — we're local, friendly, and experienced in solving damp problems in all types of homes.

**Note:** This guide is for general advice only. Always speak to your landlord, estate agent, or a qualified professional about your specific situation, and follow your tenancy agreement for what to report and when.



# KEEP YOUR PROPERTY DRY

**SPEAK TO OUR TEAM TODAY FOR ADVICE**

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