



Protecting your home from damp and mould

Some homes can experience condensation mould growth, particularly in the winter months. In most cases this can be avoided.

As an Inquilab resident, under the terms of your tenancy, you are responsible for looking after your home. This includes treating condensation and preventing mould growth in your home, and to help reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

There are however, instances where as your housing provider we are responsible, such as a building design fault or building maintenance issues.

Here we explain the causes of mould, how you can spot early signs, what to do in the event of mould in your home, and the treatments available.

What causes mould Growth

Mould Growth will occur if you allow condensation to build up in your home. It is important to ventilate your home when cooking and hanging washing inside.

Mould usually presents itself as green, grey, or black spots on walls and ceilings. It is a sign that you have excessive moisture in the air. Mould can spread quickly, so it is important that if your property starts to show signs of mould, that you vent the area and wash the mould off.

Where does mould grow

Mould grows and breeds in moist areas most commonly around windows, in bathrooms and kitchens, and unvented areas where air is unable to circulate. It can also breed in soft materials too, including carpets, curtains, and even clothes.

Excess condensation that is not dealt with, will lead to mould growth

Causes of condensation

Condensation is water (or a vapour liquid) which collects on a cold surface when humid (warm) air is in contact with it.

It typically comes from steam, such as when cooking, cleaning, bathing, and even breathing. It forms around windows, in corners, and on external walls. It occurs mainly during cold weather.

Condensation itself does not pose a direct problem, providing the water or liquid droplets are either wiped away daily, or able to naturally dry out (such as in a well-ventilated room).

Applying heat to condensation in an attempt to dry it out won't work unless the room is well-ventilated to allow the steam / liquid vapours to escape and evaporate.

How you can help prevent and treat damp and mould

You will get less mould if you keep your home warm and ventilate it properly as this will minimise the amount of moisture in the air, thereby reducing condensation and mould.

You can help by:

- Not putting wet clothes on a radiator as they will fill the room with moisture, creating condensation, very quickly. Whenever possible, dry clothes outside or in a room with an open window or with an extractor fan.
- Keep lids on saucepans while cooking. This reduces the amount of steam that can escape into the room. It is also a lot more energy efficient!
- Avoid the use paraffin or other bottled gas heaters and if you do have to use them, they must be used in an extremely well-ventilated room. As well as being dangerous, paraffin and bottled gas heaters release large amounts of water vapour.
- Always use your extractor fan or open a window when cooking or showering
- When running a bath, put some cold water in first to reduce steam
- Close doors to stop moist air spreading to other rooms
- If you have window vents keep them open to allow air to circulate in and out
- Regularly check behind furniture, including beds, that are placed against an external wall for mould. Wherever possible, place furniture against internal walls or leave a gap between the furniture and external wall to allow air to circulate.
- Open your curtains during the day as keeping them closed for long periods can trap condensation behind them
- Never block air bricks or extractor fans; keep them open and clear from obstruction
- Check extractor fans work properly and that they are free of blockages, such as a build up of dust

- Do not draught proof kitchen and bathroom windows or rooms which attract damp. This is because you will be stopping air coming in and going out which is essential for good ventilation
- Minimise cold surfaces by heating your home to a reasonable level of warmth in the winter: 21°C in the living room and 18°C in bedrooms is recommended by the World Health Organisation. You do not have to maintain these temperatures all the time but try to reach them for part of the day.
- Keep materials, such as your clothes, carpets, towels and rugs, clean and dry.

Easy Tips

Identify the areas in your home that are at risk of breeding mould, and keep these areas clear and ventilated

Open windows or use extractors when cooking, bathing or showering

Dry clothes in ventilated rooms or outside, they will dry twice as fast.

Heat your living room to 20°C and bedrooms to 18°C for at least one hour a day

Check for mould daily and wipe away small patches of mould before they spread

Treating Mould and Damp

Always wipe away signs of mould before it has time to spread. You should use a cloth with an antifungal or antibacterial spray, and you will need to thoroughly dry the area afterwards. You may need to repeat this regularly to prevent a serious outbreak of mould.

After cleaning mould away, and once you are satisfied that it has been treated, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Ordinary paint or wallpaper will not solve the problem.

It is important to remember that mould left untreated will spread and can cause harm to your health and to your property.

Who is responsible for treating mould and damp?

Mould and damp that occurs periodically, or as a result of lack of due care and attention, is your responsibility under the terms of your tenancy with Inquilab.

Where mould worsens over time despite your attempts to control it, it may be due to a building design or property maintenance malfunction, or one of the following reasons.

- **Penetrating damp:** This is caused by leaking roofs, windows, plumbing, drainage, and guttering. Once the problem is identified and fixed, the damp should not reoccur.

- **Rising damp:** While extremely rare, this is caused by water soaking up from the ground wall(s). It occurs largely in old properties and where there is no damp course or damp retaining walls.

In these circumstances, please contact us immediately. You can do this via our 'My Inquilab' App or by calling us on 0207 607 7777. Following an initial phone call assessment, we will arrange for a professional to visit your home to fully assess the situation.

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