



Damp and Mould

Hazard information for landlords

Damp and mould growth within the home can cause threats to health - both physiological and psychological.

Dampness and high humidity increases the number of dust mites and mould spores in the atmosphere. Both are potent allergens that can aggravate and trigger allergic symptoms such as rhinitis, conjunctivitis, eczema, cough and wheeze. Repeated exposure can also lead to asthma in some cases.

Causes

Condensation

The design, construction and activity in your property can contribute to excessive condensation, which can cause damp and mould growth. Moisture is produced during the usual daily activities such as breathing, cooking, washing and drying clothes. The property should be able to cope with normal levels of these activities without the need to open windows and provisions installed for removing the moisture at peak production times.

Rising Damp

Rising damp can occur when there is a breach to, or inadequate damp proofing and is caused by moisture rising up the wall. Rising damp can be identified by a tide mark or salt stains and can rise approximately one metre from ground surface.

Penetrating Damp

The design and external repair of the property can contribute to penetrating damp, if it is not kept in good repair. Defects to roof, brickwork, pointing, windows and doors can allow water to build up inside and cause damp and mould growth. Penetrating damp can also be caused by internal disrepair giving way to water leaks, for example defective sealant to a shower tray will allow water to penetrate into the surrounding walls and ceilings.

Relevant Legislation

- Housing Act 2004
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

Legal obligations of the landlord

To keep the property's structure and exterior in good repair, including the brick work and pointing, roof covering, rain water goods, external waste pipes, damp proofing, doors and windows.

To carry out all repairs to the property in relation to the internal structure and facilities as necessary in relation to the heating, ventilation, water using appliances and plumbing.

To make sure the property is safe and free from hazards.

Recommendations

- Provide suitable mechanical extraction to the kitchen and bathroom.
- Provide suitable background ventilation to the property, passive air vents, trickle vents on windows etc.
- Increase the energy efficiency of the property (heating and insulation) by providing loft/wall insulation, double glazing and upgrading heating.
- Advise tenants on condensation and how to manage and reduce moisture production in the home - Wiping away moisture, using extractor fans, not blocking up passive vents, drying clothes outside and opening windows.

You can find more information about dealing with Damp and Mould at:

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/environment-street-care/environmental-health/damp-and-mould>