

How to tell the difference between damp & condensation

An estimated 5.8 million British tenants have been affected by damp or condensation issues. However, how are you able to tell what damp issue you have and what you need to do to remove it. Below, we will discuss the most prominent forms of damp that are evident in homes, how you can identify what form of damp you have and how to eliminate this problem.

CONDENSATION

The most common damp problem to affect properties is condensation. It occurs when warm damp air comes into contact with cooler air or a cooler surface. This is most frequent in rooms containing a lot of moisture such as kitchens from cooking and bathrooms from washing.

SIGNS

- In the majority of cases, the first sign of condensation is excess water collecting on windows. While this is a common occurrence in most homes from time to time, it may be considered an air ventilation issue if it occurs consistently and regularly.



- If the condensation issue is not treated, it may result in peeling paint or plaster. If the walls appear wet and the plaster damaged, then this is likely to be a result of condensation.
- Arguably the most unpleasant sign of condensation is black mould, sometimes a This may also take the form of black spots on the wall. Sufficient moisture in a room allows the mould spores to evolve and spread across a surface.

TREATMENT

Not all condensation issues need to be treated professionally. The first steps you can take to tackle your condensation issues involve simple lifestyle changes such as opening windows regularly and

washing clothes outside where possible, or in a small room with the window open. It is important to keep doors closed and a gap between furniture and walls.

If the above does not eliminate your condensation problem, then you may wish to consider purchasing a dehumidifier or mechanical air ventilation to eliminate your condensation problem.

RISING DAMP

Rising damp can only occur on the ground floor of a building, through the process of water travelling up from the ground through the bricks and mortar by the process of capillary action.

SIGNS

- One of the most frequent signs of rising damp is the appearance of tide marks on the walls. This will normally appear anywhere up to one metre above the skirting boards. This may be accompanied by the appearance of damp patches and staining. Brown or yellow in colour, these stains will also appear just above the skirting boards.
- You may notice peeling wallpaper starting from the skirting boards. Rising Damp signs will always be evident relatively low down on the wall and it is not uncommon to see decayed or cracked skirting boards. This occurs because when rising damp comes in contact with timber, it is capable of causing within the timber
- Black mould just above the skirting board is a clear sign that a property has a rising damp issue. This damp will appear black in colour



- Another tell-tale sign of rising damp is white salts appearing on the wall. These salts are washed into the plaster and take the form of white fluffy deposits on the wall.

TREATMENT

Rising damp often leads to timber decay so generally, the sooner you have the issue treated, the less expensive it will be to treat. If you have noticed the above signs in your home, then contact an experienced and qualified [rising damp specialist](#) to have the problem eliminated before any more damage can occur.

PENETRATING DAMP

Penetrating damp is the result of water from outside the building successfully finding its way to the inside of your property. Unlike rising damp, penetrating damp can occur on any level of the property. There are several causes of penetrating damp with the most common being leaking pipes or poor brickwork. It may also be the result of gaps or damage to windows or doors.

SIGNS

- A common sign of penetrating damp is damp patches on the wall that do not go away. These patches may appear to be bigger on days that it is raining.



- Black mould on the walls is another indicator of penetrating damp. This mould may grow in size over time and may be accompanied by a musty damp smell
- If you notice any leaks or cracks in the roof or gutters, then this could be evidence that a penetrating damp issue exists in your property.

TREATMENT

The first step to treating a penetrating damp issue is establishing how the water or moisture is penetrating your property and having this leak or hole sealed so that it can no longer enter your property. If this is something you can not identify yourself, a builder or plumber should be able to identify the entry point and cut it off.

The most worrying issue with penetrating damp is it can be difficult to determine if it has caused any greater problems such as dry rot or wet rot which can have disastrous consequences for a property. If you are unsure about what to be looking out for, then don't hesitate to contact a [professionally qualified](#) damp surveyor who can assess what damage may have been potentially caused by penetrating damp.

CONCLUSION

It can be tricky to establish what type of damp problem exists but if you look out for these signs and have the issue dealt with quickly then there should be no long-lasting damage to your property.