



Types of Damp

Following on from our report there may be terms in the report that you are not familiar with, therefore we have compiled this Information Sheet. Should however you need further information, please do not hesitate in contacting us

Rising damp

Rising damp in buildings may be defined as the vertical flow of water up through a permeable wall structure, the water being derived from the ground. The water rises up through the capillaries in the masonry, loosely termed capillarity. In other words the masonry acts like a wick. Ground water contains small amounts of soluble salts, the most significant of which are chlorides, nitrates and sulphates. Both chlorides and nitrates are usually hygroscopic i.e. they can absorb moisture from the surrounding environment. Thus, even though rising damp may be controlled by the insertion of a remedial damp proof course, these salts alone can cause the wall and any contaminated decorations to remain damp.

Condensation

Condensation is usually noticed when it presents itself on decorations, often causing discoloration and a black mould growth.

Air within the living environments becomes saturated with water vapor. The main causes of air saturation are: boiling kettles, drying clothes, showers, the use of non-flued heating and even breathing. When these conditions prevail, the air inside the property becomes saturated. The amount of water vapor contained in air is related to the air temperature, hence the term 'Relative Humidity'. When saturated air begins to cool, it no longer has the ability to hold the water as vapor and at this point will release it on to a cold surface in the form of condensation. Many old properties have been renovated. In some cases, solid floors have been laid, double glazing units have been installed and the houses have been generally draught proofed to conserve expensive heat.

Apart from the vapor within the premises being removed, another factor is to try and insulate the external walls and roof, as these areas are attracting the moisture. These areas are cold due to the outside environment, so moisture is drawn to warm these areas. Where the air cannot circulate (i.e. corners), this is where the mould forms and also where heat is lost (i.e. roof).

Floor wall junction

Floor/wall junction problems occur when the plaster on the wall is in direct contact with a solid floor. Moisture is able to soak into the plaster, though not rise significantly as there is no capillary action occurring. The base of the wall usually has a very high moisture level that quickly reduces; this fault is often misdiagnosed and leads to remedial work in the form of a chemical damp proof course.

Bridged cavities and damp proof courses (DPC)

The problems occurs when the debris are within the cavity or when boundary walls allow moisture to bypass the DPC and soak into the plaster, though not rise significantly as there is no capillary action occurring. The base of the wall usually has a very high moisture level that quickly reduces; this fault is often misdiagnosed and leads to remedial work in the form of a chemical damp proof course.



Information Sheet

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Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp occurs through moisture entering the structure via items such as defective render, pointing, rainwater services to name but a few. It presents physical decay to generally isolated areas associated to where the ingress occurs.

Rain penetration through masonry (known as penetrating damp) is a common problem in buildings – particularly in the case of those of solid wall construction. The problem is also increasingly common in buildings of cavity wall construction where cavity wall insulation has been poorly installed or used in walls that are not suitable for cavity wall insulation. Other paths through which rain can cross through a cavity wall include incorrectly positioned wall ties and mortar obstructions in the cavity.

The most common visual symptom of rain penetration is damp patches on internal walls – often causing paint to flake or wallpaper to peel. However damp masonry caused by penetrating damp can also result in a wide range of other symptoms including :

- Reduced thermal resistance of damp masonry – causing heat loss and condensation
- Moss and mould growth
- Frost damage
- Rotting of embedded timbers
- Disfiguring carbonate deposits

Lateral penetrating damp due to adverse grounds levels

This occurs when moisture enters a structure which is below ground or where the external ground level is particularly high i.e. damp soil is in direct contact with the wall and over time moisture from the soil soaks through onto the internal wall surface.

Salt Damp

This form of dampness is normally associated around chimneybreasts or where coal has been stored. Salts enter the masonry and overtime leach through the masonry that leaches through the structure to present damp spots on localised areas. Often this problem leads to unnecessary work being undertaken to the roof and to the top of the chimney stack.



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