



## Repairs - damp

It's not always easy to work out if your landlord is responsible for resolving problems with damp. This is because it can be difficult to find the exact cause of damp without the help of a surveyor, unless, it's obvious, such as a leaking roof.

### Check what kind of damp you have

Damp is a common problem which many tenants experience when renting accommodation. There are several types of damp:

- **rising damp**, which happens when moisture travels up from the ground through the masonry to the height of about one metre
- **penetrating damp**, which happens when water penetrates into the fabric of a building from outside to inside, for example, because of a leaking downpipe
- **construction damp**, where damp is caused by a problem in how the property was designed
- **condensation damp**, which generally happens when a property can't deal with normal levels of water vapour because of a lack of insulation, ventilation or heating, or a combination of all of these things.

#### Dealing with rising damp

Rising damp is more common in older properties. It generally affects the lower part of the ground floor of a property up to the height of about 1 metre. So, if you live above the ground floor in a block of flats and have damp, it won't be rising damp.

## Who's responsible for rising damp

In many cases, your landlord is responsible for dealing with rising damp. This is because there's a term implied into your tenancy agreement which says that it's their responsibility to keep the exterior and structure of your home in repair.

If there's a problem with an existing damp-proof course (DPC) in your home which is causing the damp, then your landlord is likely to be responsible for repairing it.

If your home doesn't have a DPC, your landlord may not be responsible for putting one in. This is because the work may be regarded as an improvement rather than a repair. Each case would have to be considered on its own facts.

Your landlord might be responsible for the damp if it means your home isn't safe for you to live in - for example if it's made you or your family ill.

Check what repairs your landlord has to make if you rent your home from:

- [a private landlord \(/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/\)](/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/)
- [a housing association or the council \(/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/repairs-what-are-the-landlord-s-responsibilities/\)](/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/repairs-what-are-the-landlord-s-responsibilities/)

Your landlord is usually responsible for repairing the problem when they become aware of it, so make sure you report the problem to them straight away.

## Dealing with penetrating damp

Penetrating damp can be caused by a number of repair problems, for example:

- a leaking roof
- a cracked wall
- leaking guttering or external pipes

- a leaking drainage pipe
- rotten windows or doors.

## Who's responsible for penetrating damp

In many cases where the damp is caused by problems such as those listed above, the landlord is responsible for repairing the problem. This is because a term implied into your tenancy agreement says that the landlord must keep in repair the exterior and structure of your home as well as installations like basins, sinks, baths, toilets and their pipework.

Your landlord might also be responsible for the damp if it means your home isn't safe for you to live in - for example if it's made you or your family ill.

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Your landlord is usually responsible for repairing the problem when they become aware of it - so make sure you report the problem to them straight away.

## Dealing with construction damp

Construction damp is caused by a problem with a property's design. For example, a design defect in a property causes the basement to become damp when the level in the water table rises.

## Who's responsible for construction damp

In cases of construction damp, if the design problem doesn't affect the structure or exterior of your home or cause any damage to the building, then your landlord may not have a responsibility under the tenancy agreement to prevent the damp.

However, your landlord is responsible for repairs if a design problem causes damage to the building, for example to a wall or ceiling plaster.

Your landlord might also be responsible for the damp if it means your home isn't safe for you to live in - for example if it's made you or your family ill.

Check what repairs your landlord has to make if you rent your home from:

- [a private landlord \(/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/\)](/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/)
- [a housing association or the council \(/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/repairs-what-are-the-landlord-s-responsibilities/\)](/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/repairs-what-are-the-landlord-s-responsibilities/)

Your landlord is usually responsible for repairing the problem when they become aware of it - so make sure you report the problem to them straight away.

## Dealing with condensation damp

Condensation damp can occur anywhere on a wall. It may form at the base of wall, or from top to bottom. It can result in mould growth, damage to furniture and belongings and in some cases mite infestation.

### Who's responsible for condensation damp

Your landlord will probably be responsible for dealing with damp if:

- your tenancy agreement says they're responsible - or it says they will keep your home "fit to live in" or something similar
- the damp was caused by your landlord not making certain repairs to your home - for example, not fixing the heating or ventilation
- the damp has caused damage to your home that your landlord has to repair - for example, if it's made window frames to rot or damaged plasterwork

Your landlord might also be responsible for dealing with damp if it means your home isn't safe for you to live in - for example if it's making you or your family ill.

Check what repairs your landlord has to make if you rent your home from:

- [a private landlord \(/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/\)](/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/dealing-with-repairs/)
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Your landlord is usually responsible for repairing the problem when they become aware of it - so make sure you report the problem to them straight away.

## Using your home in a reasonable way

If your home has condensation damp then how you use your home is important. Some day-to-day things that you do could make it difficult to show that your landlord is responsible. The following things can create extra moisture or reduce ventilation:

- use of portable gas or paraffin heaters – these heaters put a lot of moisture into the air so you should try to avoid using them
- drying wet clothes on heaters – it's best to dry clothes outside or in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on
- using a tumble dryer with no outside vent – unless a tumble dryer is a self-condensing type, it should be vented to the outside
- blocking ventilation – for example, covering air vents, closing ventilators and switching off or disabling fans. Ventilation is needed in your home to get rid of moisture

## Help with heating and insulating your home

You may qualify for grants that are available for home insulation and heating improvements. You can also get useful information on effective ways to heat and insulate your home from the Energy Savings Trust.

### [More about grants and schemes to help you save money on energy bills](#)

([/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills/](#)).

Find a grant at [www.energysavingsttust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingsttust.org.uk) [↗](#)

## Taking action on damp

If you've reported problems with damp to your landlord and they haven't done anything about it, there is action you can take.

In some cases, a private landlord may decide to evict a tenant rather than do repair work. Make sure you know whether you're at risk of eviction before taking action.

- [More about private tenants and the risk of eviction](#) ([/housing/renting-privately/ending-your-tenancy/if-youre-being-evicted-because-you-asked-for-repairs-renting-privately/](#)).

## Contacting the local authority

Tenants in private rented accommodation and tenants of housing associations could contact the local authority's Environmental Health department.

If the damp in your home is harmful to your health or is a nuisance, then it may be a statutory nuisance. Where there is a statutory nuisance, the local authority may be able to force your landlord to deal with the problem.

Or the damp could be a risk to your health or safety and therefore a hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

- [More about statutory nuisance and the HHSRS for tenants in social housing](#) ([/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/asking-the-local-authority-for-help/asking-the-local-authority-for-help-with-repairs/](#)).

## Taking court action

If your landlord's responsible for dealing with damp and they don't do it, it's possible to take them to court. Taking court action can be costly and time consuming and you should only take it as a last resort.

[More about taking court action because the landlord failed to make repairs for tenants in private rented accommodation \(/housing/renting-privately/during-your-tenancy/going-to-court-if-your-landlord-wont-do-repairs-private/\)](#)

[More about taking court action because the landlord failed to make repairs for tenants in social housing \(/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/taking-court-action-because-your-landlord-wont-make-repairs/\)](#)

## Other options

There are other options that you can consider when dealing with repair problems such as damp.

- [More about other options for private rented tenants \(/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-private-rented-tenant/\)](#)
- [More about other options for social housing tenants \(/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-what-are-your-options-if-you-are-a-social-housing-tenant/\)](#)

## Next steps

- [Other common repair problems \(/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-common-problems/\)](#)

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### Did this advice help?

 Yes No

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