



Diagnose Your Damp

The easy way to understand your damp problem.



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www.dampgenius.co.uk



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SAFE AND DRY HOMES FOR ALL

Introduction

Understanding a damp problem can be confusing since there are numerous potential sources of moisture which can affect a property. By using this guide you will learn the main sources of dampness in any building and the most likely course of action that needs to be taken to solve it.

On the next page you will find a flow chart which will take you step by step from diagnosis to solution. Further on in this booklet we have a selection of photos showing how the various types of damp typically look and you will find that these can also be helpful in helping build understanding.

In broad terms there are three main types of damp which affect buildings.

These are:

1. Rising dampness
2. Penetrating damp
3. Airborne moisture (condensation)

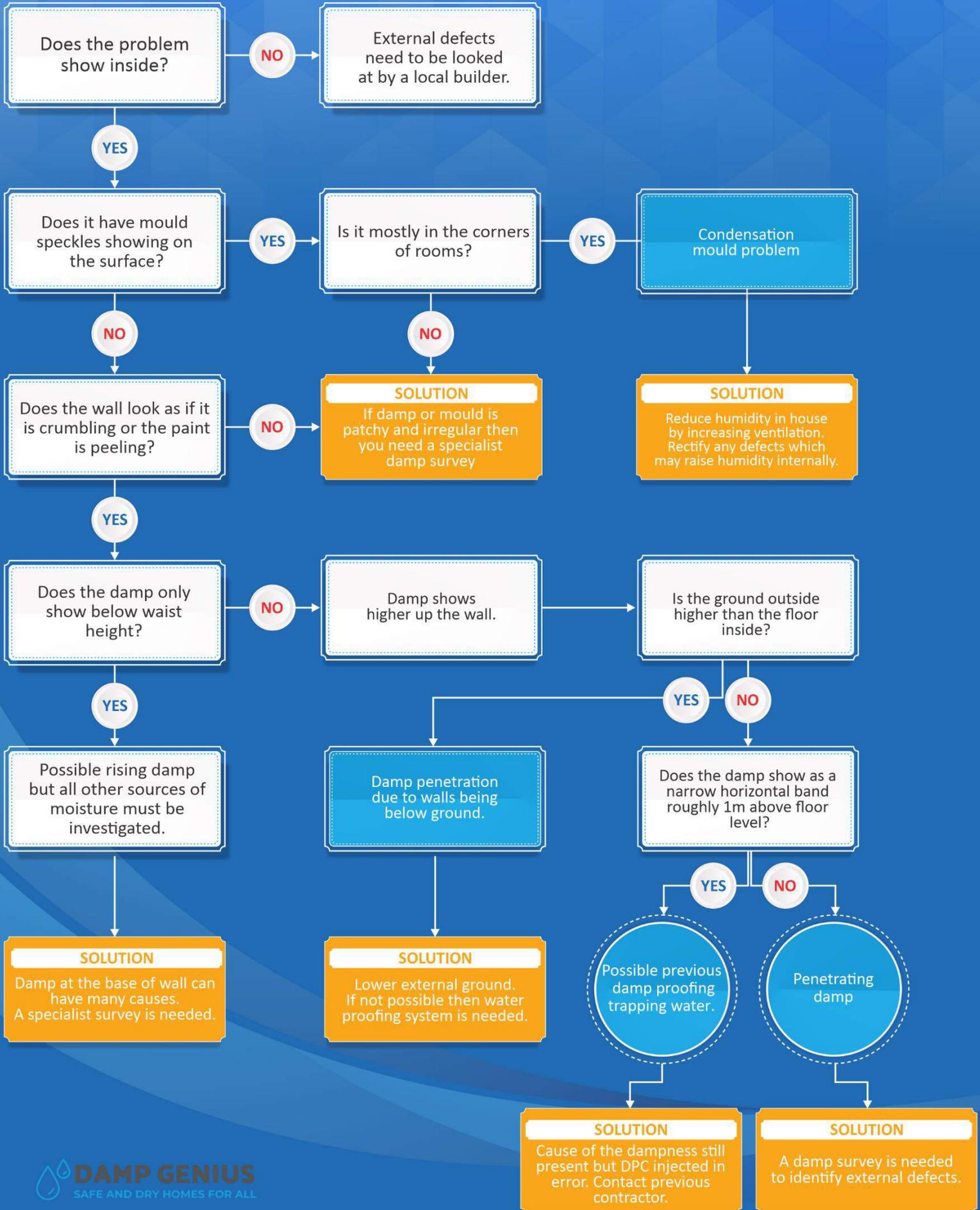
These typically have unique characteristics which can be used to identify them. It is vital to understand the source of the moisture before deciding on the best method needed to solve the damp problem.

How to use the Flow Chart

Begin in the top left corner of the diagram and for every question asked choose the yes or no answer. The flow chart will gradually narrow down the damp issue until the type of problem and typical solution can be identified.

Please remember that not every damp problem can be diagnosed this way. This is certainly the case with suspected rising damp which can easily be diagnosed incorrectly. Buildings are all different and sometimes unusual things happen that cannot be placed into a neat box of problem/solution. If this happens to you then you will need to speak with a qualified damp surveyor to arrange for further investigations to be carried out.

DIAGNOSE YOUR DAMP



Rising Damp



Salt contamination causes blistering on the plaster surface.



Damp meters, like this one, react to salt, and should not be used to diagnose rising damp.

Plaster is likely to crumble and paint to peel off up to a maximum height of 1.2m above the ground – roughly waist height for most adults.

Bubbling on the wall is due to salt crystals growing and bursting the plaster.

Be aware that damp proof courses rarely fail and all other possible sources of moisture should be ruled out before installing a chemical damp proof course. Identifying the actual reason can be difficult so a professional survey is often required.

The little two pronged damp meter, often used by sales surveyors, cannot be used to diagnose rising damp as per the [BRE DG 245 guidance document](#).



Condensation Mould Problem



Airborne moisture which comes from breathing, cooking, showering etc can lead to condensation and mould forming in cold corners and on cold surfaces.

The problem is made worse in buildings which cannot breathe. Lime rendered traditional buildings should breathe very well, sadly, ill-informed applications of cement render can reduce breathability to problem levels. Modern, cement render/mortar, buildings are not designed to be breathable so adequate mechanical ventilation is vital if good air quality is to be achieved.

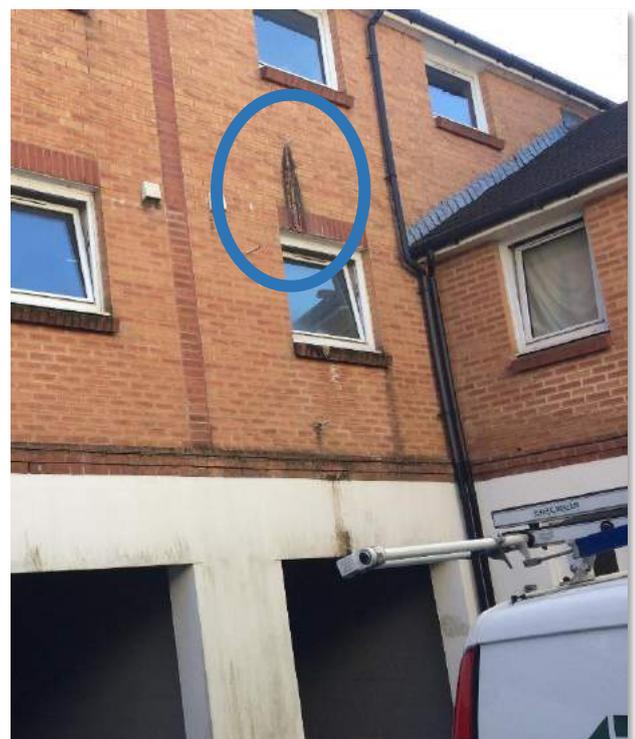


Penetrating Damp



Damp can penetrate through walls and roofs to cause damage inside the building. Overflowing guttering, leaking outflow pipes, missing roof tiles and cracked render can all be culprits.

Dry Rot is often caused by penetrating damp – this rot is very destructive and expensive to fix.



How to solve your Damp Problem

As you will have now seen there are many types of damp and as a result there are many ways to solve the problem. Below is an overview of the most common methods used within a typical brick or stone building.

Rising Damp

Suspected rising damp is easily mis-diagnosed or mistakenly blamed on a failed damp proof course with the real cause being overlooked. An overview of the most common causes of dampness at the base of walls can be found [here](#). Damp proof courses were not used widely until late Victorian times and older properties should almost never need to have a damp proof course injection and cement render applied. If you have an older property, it is well worth having a survey carried out to determine the cause of the damp before getting any works done. The incorrect use of chemical injections and cement renders can cause serious long term damage.

Condensation Mould Problems

Fixing these issues often requires changing a combination of lifestyle, heating and ventilation. There are some circumstances when the building fabric is contributing to the condensation mould, such as older buildings being rendered with cement instead of breathable lime render. Other times the property may have poor ventilation and improving this with intelligent fans or positive input ventilation systems will get rid of the mould permanently.

If the property is one that you let out or rent then you need to be aware that the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 puts legal obligations on landlords regarding damp and ventilation. To make sure you do not fall foul of this law you should ask a qualified damp surveyor to inspect the property.

Penetrating Damp

Dampness coming in from outside the building is fairly common and unfortunately can go unnoticed for some time. Solving the problem will generally require the offending defect (gutters, tiles, cracked render, poor pointing etc.) to be fixed. In time the wall will dry out, however, it is crucial to understand that wall plaster which has salt damage present will not dry out because the salts absorb moisture from the surrounding air. Walls dry out

at a rate of just 1” depth per month so once the external defects are repaired you must allow time for the internal face of the wall to dry out.

Further help?

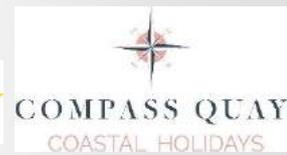
Sometimes the simplest solution in life is talk to an expert. If your damp problem does not neatly fit one of the examples above then it may be easiest to arrange for a specialist damp surveyor to visit the property.

Damp Genius offer surveys for landlords, homeowners, home buyers and commercial clients. Survey reports are sent out within 48 hours and include a plain English run down of the problems present and how best to fix them.

What people say about Damp Genius...

“All paid. Thanks again. Bonnie said you were a pleasure to work with.”

Karina – Holiday Home Owner – via email



“Excellent. Very tidy and clean. Tidied up each day when they left. Problem solved and such a helpful and courteous service.”

Mrs Larcombe via Checkatrade



“Spoke to the surveyor over the phone and within minutes he had described potential issues and had arranged a visit to the property. He was efficient, professional and extremely friendly. He explained the potential issues and within 36hrs sent me a detailed report that explained the issues present. I would absolutely recommend this company!”

Dan R. via Google Reviews

