

# TIPS FOR ADDRESSING MOISTURE PROBLEMS

## IDENTIFICATION & SOLUTIONS

Mould will typically grow indoors if moisture is present and may result from:

- Showering or bathing, washing clothes or cooking, particularly if exhaust fans are not working properly, not vented outside, or not used.
- Infiltration of water from the outside through plumbing leaks, cracks in the foundation, floor, walls, roof, or any unsealed windows or entryways.
- Moisture condensation on cold surfaces, such as windows.
- Flooding (e.g., snow melt, storm surges, excessive rainfall).
- Overcrowding (e.g., too many individuals breathing, bathing, washing, and cooking).

Mould growth can be hidden and can grow behind walls or above ceiling tiles, therefore it is important to check for the presence of mould anywhere that is damp, and especially where water damage is known to occur.



In cases where a moisture or mould problem is suspected, a walk-through should be done of all rooms, including attics, basements, crawl spaces, and storage spaces. Look for stains or discolouration on floors, walls, window panes, ceiling tiles, fabrics, carpets, peeling paint, wrinkled wallpaper, cracks in plaster, warped wood, condensation, flooding, and for musty/earthy odours.

On the building exterior, look for obvious signs of issues with building integrity (such as damage that may allow water intrusion), or deteriorated materials or surfaces (including missing downspouts or staining).



Depending on the extent of the problem; or if strong, musty odours are detected but no clear signs of water damage or mould are seen; consider consulting with a professional. They can examine the condition and suggest a mitigation and remediation plan.

**Immediate action is important. Mould will begin to grow in an area with excessive moisture within 48 hours.**



## PREVENTION

- Use ventilation, exhaust fans in kitchens and bathrooms; and using air conditioning systems to reduce moisture levels.



- Use moisture resistant materials in areas likely to get wet (e.g., kitchen, bathrooms, laundry areas).
- Maintain relative humidity levels between 30% and 50%, using a dehumidifier as necessary, and make sure the windows are closed when the dehumidifier is running.
- Keep bedding and furniture away from outside walls for good airflow.
- Keep closets and storage spaces free of clutter, especially if near an outside wall.
- Use a vacuum with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, or a central vacuum vented outdoors.
- When storing items, use plastic bins instead of cardboard and consider removing any carpets from the basement floor.
- Check plumbing pipes for condensation, dry pipes and insulate them.
- Leave the washing machine door open when not in use so that any remaining water can dry to help reduce mould and bacteria growth inside the washing machine.
- Make sure that the washing machine drains directly into the laundry sink/ drain without dripping or splashing outside of the basin. Use pipe extensions to reduce any splashing and regularly check hoses and connections for leaks.
- Check that your clothes dryer vents to the outside, seal the joints in the dryer duct and clean the lint tray every time you use the dryer.
- Routinely inspect the outside exhaust vent and remove any built-up lint and make sure the outside vent is kept clear of obstructions, such as snow and foliage.
- Ensure rain, irrigation water, and snowmelt drain away from the building.
- Keep eavestroughs and downspouts clean of debris and ensuring that the outflow runs away from the building and not into neighbouring foundations.
- Promptly repair leaks such as around windows, window frames, and sills; and dry moisture.



- Keep window coverings open to allow warm air to reach the windows. Heavy curtains or blinds can trap the cold and moisture and cause condensation on your windows.
- Never use bleach to clean up mould.

For more information visit [www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/addressing-moisture-mould-your-home.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/addressing-moisture-mould-your-home.html)