

TREATING MOULD AND MILDEW (TENANTS)

Mould and Mildew is not only unsightly, it is a health hazard. Mould and mildew are thought to contribute to breathing difficulties and asthma. It damages surfaces as it 'eats' into paint and causes decay of materials. It is important to get it under control.

Mould and mildew occur naturally. They require a food source (tiny particles of dust or grease) and moisture to develop. Mildew and mould can be made worse by activities of the occupants inside a property, by water leaks, or the location of the building.

Inform your property manager/landlord if mould and mildew are present when you take possession of a property – the property should be clean and any spores treated. If it developed while you are living there, you need to clean all affected surfaces with appropriate cleaning products, and avoid activities that increase the likelihood of mildew or mould developing. Don't leave it until it gets really bad – it will damage the property and your health.

Tell your property manager/landlord if you suspect a water leak is causing the problem.

Avoiding Problems:

- Open doors and windows to allow air to circulate. Using a fan will help air move
- Use a dehumidifier to reduce moisture buildup inside the property – this will help your heaters warm the house quicker too as dry air is easier to heat
- Use the extractor fan in the kitchen when cooking or open windows to remove steam
- Put lids on pots of boiling water to prevent steam escaping the pot when cooking, and turn down elements once water is boiling.
- Gas heaters generate lots of moisture and give off dangerous gasses. We recommend using other types of heaters e.g. oil column or fan heaters
- Use heaters – warm air prevents moisture on surfaces, reducing mould
- Dry clothes outside where possible. If you dry clothes inside on racks the moisture will stay inside. Use the garage, shed, or verandah in bad weather
- Vent clothes driers to the outside of the house – ducting kits are available for most models of drier. Attach to drier and put the other end out the window
- Minimize moisture buildup by opening a window, or running a fan when showering. Keep door to rest of house closed until room is dry
- Wipe off accumulated moisture off walls, ceilings, and windows sills.
- Window condensation is vertical puddles. Use a rubber squeegee to remove it quickly and easily, then mop up the window sills
- Open windows to vent bedrooms while you are sleeping – less moisture buildup plus better oxygen supply to fuel your brain.

Treating Problems:

- Use bleach, e.g. Janola and water mixed (1 part bleach to 9 parts water) to clean off mould and mildew, or commercial preparation, such as Exit-Mould.
- Open curtains, nets, and blinds. Sunshine warms and dries the air, and UV light from the sun disinfects surfaces. This will slow the return of mildew.
- Natural products include vinegar, lemon juice, and tea-tree oil can be great preventatives.