



Condensation (BS 5250)

Moisture in the air forming on cold surfaces. Occurs when warm, humid air meets cold surfaces like windows, walls, or thermal bridges.

Causes: Poor ventilation, inadequate heating, high moisture production, thermal bridging.

Typical signs: Water droplets on windows, mould growth in corners, damp patches on external walls, musty odours.

Why misdiagnosis happens: Surface dampness can look similar to rising damp or penetrating damp, leading to unnecessary chemical treatments.

Why This Matters

Condensation needs ventilation improvements and temperature balance—not damp-proof courses or chemical injection.

Hygroscopic Moisture (BRE Digest 245)

Materials absorbing moisture due to salts. Hygroscopic salts in building materials draw moisture from the air, even in low humidity conditions.

Causes: Contamination from ground salts, previous flooding, old chimney breasts, animal waste, or failed damp-proof courses.

Typical signs: Damp patches that persist year-round, salt deposits on walls, tide marks, plaster deterioration, readings that don't match weather patterns.

Why misdiagnosis happens: Moisture meters show high readings that are often mistaken for rising damp, leading to unnecessary injection treatments that don't address the salt contamination.

Why This Matters

Hygroscopic moisture needs salt management and controlled drying—not just damp-proofing.

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Ingress (BS 6576)

Liquid water entering through defects. Water penetrates the building fabric through cracks, gaps, failed pointing, or damaged roofing.

Causes: Defective gutters, cracked render, failed pointing, roof damage, bridged cavities, poor detailing around openings.

Typical signs: Damp patches after rain, staining below windows or rooflines, water tracks on walls, localized dampness, seasonal variation.

Why misdiagnosis happens: Penetrating damp can appear at low levels and be confused with rising damp, resulting in injection treatments instead of building repairs.

Why This Matters

Ingress needs building fabric repair and weatherproofing—not chemical injection.

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Why Separation Matters

British Standards require surveyors to distinguish between these three mechanisms because each demands a fundamentally different remedial approach.

Condensation requires ventilation and thermal improvements. Hygroscopic moisture requires salt management and controlled drying. Ingress requires building fabric repair and weatherproofing.

Misdiagnosis leads to inappropriate treatments, wasted expenditure, and unresolved moisture problems. Standards-based assessment protects property owners and ensures effective remediation.

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