



# Understanding Moisture in Buildings

British Standards identify three distinct moisture mechanisms. Accurate diagnosis requires separating each type during property surveys.

Swipe to explore each mechanism

# The Three Moisture Mechanisms

## Condensation

Water vapour in air converts to liquid on cold surfaces. Governed by BS 5250. Caused by inadequate ventilation or heating. Shows as surface water, mould growth, or streaming windows.

## Hygroscopic Moisture

Materials absorb water vapour from humid air. Detailed in BRE Digest 245. Salt-contaminated walls actively draw moisture. Common in older buildings with historic dampness or ground salts.

## Ingress

Liquid water penetrates building fabric. Covered by BS 6576. Results from defects: failed pointing, damaged roofs, plumbing leaks. Water travels through cracks, joints, or porous materials.

Each mechanism requires different investigation methods and remedial approaches. Misdiagnosis leads to ineffective treatment.

# Why Separation Matters

Surveys must distinguish between mechanisms because treatments differ fundamentally. Condensation requires ventilation improvements. Hygroscopic moisture needs salt removal and drying. Ingress demands building fabric repair.

Applying the wrong solution wastes resources and fails to resolve the underlying issue. Standards-based assessment protects property owners and ensures effective remediation.

**Share this guide with colleagues who conduct moisture surveys**

---

True Damp Specialists — Accurate. Independent. Trusted.