Awaab's Law: Guidance for Landlords in Scotland

Easy Read version

September 2026

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Introduction



There will be a new law from 6 October 2026. Landlords in Scotland will have to check reports of damp or mould. They will have to start repairs quickly.



Damp and mould can be bad for people's health.



It is important that landlords and tenants work together and talk to each other about what is happening.

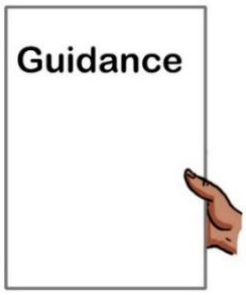


Tenants who think they have damp or mould should tell their landlords as soon as possible.



This is an Easy Read version. You can read the full guidance for landlords.

What this guidance is for



To help landlords do what the new rules say they must.



It can be used by tenants for information. It can be used by other people working in housing and repairs.



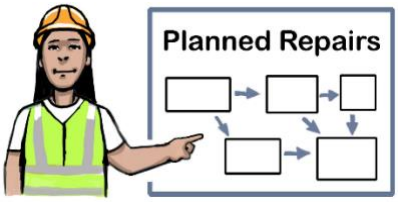
Every case of damp and mould is different. The new rules are only for **substantial** damp or mould**. Substantial** means it is large and may cause harm. This could be because:

- there is a lot of it
- it has been there a long time
- someone is at more risk because of their age or health

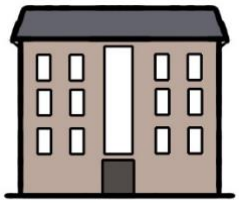


Landlords must ask for expert help if they need it. They must make sure they follow the new rules.

New rules



The new rules apply to all homes in Scotland that come under the **Right to Repair Scheme** or the **Repairing Standard**.



The **Right to Repair Scheme** is for social housing. It means some repairs must be done quickly within set times.



The **Repairing Standard** is for most private rented housing. It tells landlords what they must do to keep homes safe and in good condition.





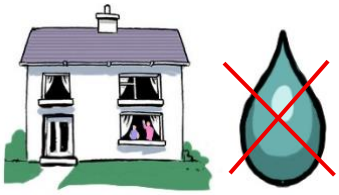
If a tenant reports damp or mould, the landlord must:

- check it within 10 **working days**.
  Working days means not weekends or public holidays
- give the tenant a report about the check in the next 3 working days

If substantial damp or mould is found:



- repair must start within 5 working days of the check
- social landlords must finish the repair within 20 working days of starting work
- private landlords must finish the repair as soon as they can



Landlords must do their best to stop it from coming back.



The damp or mould must be checked by a skilled person. They must have the knowledge to:

- check if the home has substantial damp or mould
- decide if repair is needed

If the landlord cannot do it in time



A landlord may not be able to check or repair the problem in time. This may be due to something they cannot control.

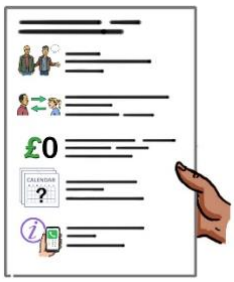


If this happens, the landlord must tell the tenant:

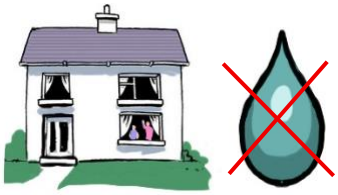
- what they cannot do in time
- why not
- when they think they can do it



The landlord must meet the needs of the tenant. This might mean giving information in:

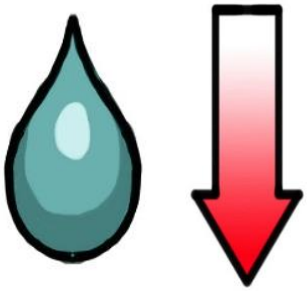


- another language
- easy read
- other accessible formats

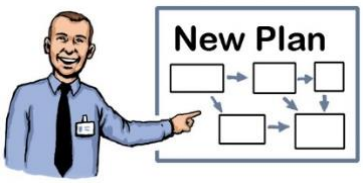


The landlord must take steps to reduce the effect of damp and mould if they can, until the problem can be fixed.

They might:



- take away mould
- put in fans
- stop leaks
- check on the problem

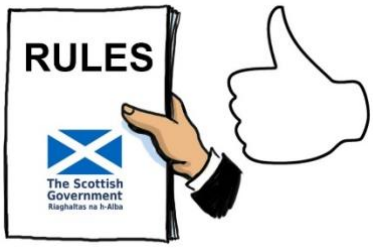


If a landlord thinks they will not be able to do anything for a long time, they should make plans so the rules are followed.

Keep records



The new law says landlords should record all work they do.



If a tenant complains that a landlord has not followed the rules, the landlord needs to prove:

- that they did follow them, or
- that they could not because of something they had no control over

Damp and mould



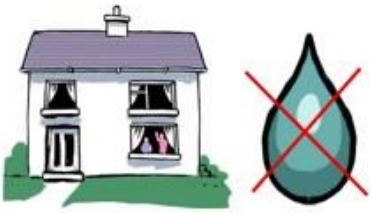
These can be bad for people's health and bad for the building. It can get worse the longer it is not fixed.



They can cause:

- breathing problems
- rashes or sore skin
- poor mental health

What it is



Damp happens when there is too much water in the air or walls. This can cause mould to grow. There are different kinds of damp.

- **traumatic damp**
- **rising damp**
- **penetrating damp**
- **condensation**

Traumatic damp is caused by a sudden bad event, like a burst pipe.



This picture shows what damp and mould might look like. It was made by a computer.

Rising damp comes up from the ground. It usually only affects the ground floor. The landlord must usually fix this.



This picture shows what damp and mould might look like. Not all rising damp will look like this. The picture was made by a computer.

What you might see outside near the bottom of the wall:

- strange colour bricks or stone
- crumbly bricks or stone
- moss

What it might be like inside:

- a stained line going across the wall
- flakes or bubbles low down on walls
- rotten skirting boards
- damp smell, maybe from carpets
- damp carpets

Penetrating damp gets into a property from outside because something is wrong with part of the building. Like the walls or roof. The landlord must usually fix this.



This picture shows what damp and mould might look like. Not all penetrating damp will look like this. The picture was made by a computer.

What it might be like inside:

- damp patches on walls and ceilings
- strange coloured patches on walls and ceilings
- flakes or bubbles on walls
- rot on wood or inside the roof
- bad or mouldy smell
- mould on walls, carpets

What it might look like outside:

- dark patches or mould on walls
- plants in gutters
- plants in cracks

Condensation is when **humid** air touches a cold wall or window. **Humid** is when there is lots of water in the air. The water goes from the air onto the wall. This lets mould grow.



This picture shows what damp and mould might look like. Not all condensation will look like this. The picture was made by a computer.

What it might look like:

- water drops on surfaces
- visible mould

There may be things that a tenant can do to stop condensation in their home.

Finding out about a problem

A landlord must follow the new rules as soon as they know about a damp or mould problem.



This might be when:

- a tenant tells them
- someone else tells them
- they spot it when checking the home
- they find it while fixing something else



Landlords and tenants should work together to deal with damp and mould quickly. This can:

- be better for health
- stop damage



Landlords should make it easy for tenants to tell them about problems. They should ask tenants to report issues quickly.

Landlords must not blame tenants. They must not assume damp is caused by a tenant.



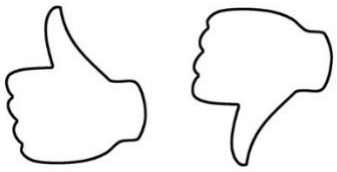
Landlords should not ignore damp and mould because they think it is caused by normal activities like:

- cooking
- bathing
- washing clothes
- drying clothes indoors



If these are part of the problem, landlords should work with tenants to find ways to make it better.

Checking for damp and mould



The person who does the check must decide:

- if there is substantial damp and mould
- if something needs to be fixed



They will look at how much damp or mould there is, and how long it has been there.

They will check if anyone in the home is more at risk from the effects of damp and mould. This could be:



- babies and children
- older people
- pregnant women
- people with some health conditions or treatments
- people with mobility problems or who are housebound



Tenants might show medical evidence, but they do not have to. Landlords must follow the rules about keeping personal information.

The check will try to find any causes of damp and mould:



- leaks
- structural defects
- poor air flow
- poor insulation
- heating problems

The person may check for hidden mould.

How checks should be made



Checks should normally be done by visiting the house and looking.



Checks can be done without an in-person visit if:

- the tenant asks
- a proper check can be done that way



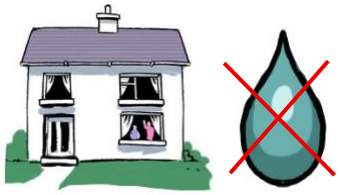
The check is only finished when there is a decision about:

- if there is substantial damp or mould
- if repairs are needed



Sometimes it can be hard to understand the cause of damp or mould and what repairs are needed. The cause might not be found in 1 visit. It may need to be checked more closely or by someone else.

If that takes longer than 10 working days, the landlord:



- should say what was found so far
- should say the time rules may not be met
- must try to make it better while the checks are happening

More damp or mould after check



If damp or mould gets worse after the check, the landlord must carry out a new check.
The same rules for times apply again.

Access



Landlords and tenants should agree a good time for checks and repairs in the home. Information might be provided in different ways.



The landlord has a right to get in. If the tenant does not let them in, the landlord will not have to follow the time rules. They may have to show that they tried.

Written report



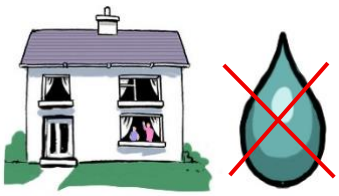
After the check, a written report must be sent out to the tenant in the next 3 days. It should say:



- who carried out the check
- what was found
- if the property is free from substantial damp and mould
- any repairs done
- any repairs needed
- when those repairs should start

Repair work

If substantial damp or mould is found, repairs should:



- get rid of damp and mould safely
- fix the cause
- help stop it coming back

Cleaning mould without fixing the cause is not enough.

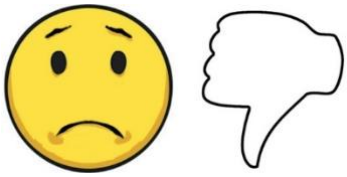


Sometimes a landlord cannot get repairs done on time because of something they cannot help.



If this happens, they must tell the tenant and keep a record of the reason for delay.

Complaints



If a tenant thinks the landlord has not followed the rules, they should complain to the landlord.

In social housing if things are not done in time, tenants may be entitled to payments:



- £15 first payment
- Add £3 for every working day of delay
- Stops at £100 total



In private housing tenants can go to the First-tier **Tribunal** for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber). A **Tribunal** is like a court. It can make decisions about a case.



The Tribunal can:

- order the landlord to make repairs
- stop or lower rent until repairs are done
- go to the council if the landlord does not make the repairs



The council can make the repairs and get the cost back from the landlord.

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80775-458-7 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, September 2026

PPDAS1768987 (09/26)