

## Moisture in your Home

High moisture levels make your home uncomfortable and unhealthy, and can damage its structure. According to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, about 45% of our homes suffer from mould caused by too much moisture. High moisture levels are associated with health problems including asthma, eczema and headaches.

High moisture levels can be caused by: condensation - when warm air comes into contact with a cold surface such as a window, roof space or wall; moisture getting into the home from outside - especially from leaks and damp ground beneath the house; water released from household activities such as washing, cooking and even breathing; moisture released from unflued gas heaters.

In new buildings, some moisture is trapped during the construction process. Wet timber and concrete may also have been used. This will dry out eventually over the first year of the building's life, as long as the house is properly heated, ventilated and insulated. Some people use a dehumidifier to remove moisture from the air, but try eliminating moisture sources and improving ventilation in wet areas, before considering a dehumidifier. If you do use a dehumidifier, ensure the water collected is emptied frequently and close your windows and doors when running it. Maintenance is critical to keeping your home dry. Check your roof, guttering, windows and flashings, balconies and decks for leaks, and get any leaks repaired quickly. A surprising amount of moisture - up to 30kg often gets in from under the floor, especially if water pools under your house or the soil is always damp. You can prevent this by: covering the ground under the house with a moisture or vapour barrier. This is a sheet of heavy polythene, laid out on the ground reaching several centimetres up the walls and taped at all joints and piles; using a damp proof course and polythene under a new concrete slab foundation; installing close-fitting under-floor insulation; ventilating enclosed sub-floor spaces; checking for, and repairing, any plumbing leaks under the house; dealing with surface runoff or underground water – drain it away from the house.

Also, it's not a good idea to use air from a roof space for ventilation. Research has found that in winter, this air is likely to be higher in moisture than the air in your heated home – so you may be bringing more moisture into the house. Additionally, the air in your roof space is likely to be polluted with dust, mould and vermin and its quality is dependent on the filter and how clean it is kept. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) recommends that the supply air of home ventilation systems be sourced from the outside, not from the roof space.

Avoid unflued gas. Don't use gas heaters unless they're vented outside. Unflued gas heaters release a litre of moisture inside your home for every hour that you use them. Not only that, they also emit other pollutants which can be unsafe for you and your family.

Extract moist air. The most significant sources of moisture in your home are the kitchen, bathroom and laundry. All these rooms should have extractor fans or range hoods to remove moisture. Vent to the outside not into the roof space as that will allow moisture to accumulate and damage your insulation and internal roof structures. Clothes dryers also produce a lot of moisture. Vent your dryer outside, too. Effective ventilation will help to remove moist air from your home and bring in cleaner air that's healthier to breathe. Insulation and double glazing helps keep the air inside your home warm. It also keeps surfaces warm so moisture won't form on them when it gets cold outside. An insulated room will have fewer problems with condensation on walls and windows. There are legal minimum requirements for insulation in new homes and renovations - it's worth exceeding these requirements if you can to get a drier, more comfortable home. A warm home is usually a drier home so using passive heating or an effective heating system to keep your home warm will also help to reduce moisture.

You can take simple and inexpensive steps to reduce the moisture in your home:

- Don't dry your clothes inside - otherwise the moisture will evaporate inside your home, resulting in condensation. Use an outdoor clothesline, ideally out of the rain.
- Cover pots when they're boiling on the stove – and use your range hood.
- Avoid over-watering indoor plants.
- Fix any leaking taps – you'll save on your water bill as well.
- Fix leaks in the roof, and around windows and doors, so the weather stays on the outside of the house.

(taken from smarterhomes.co.nz)



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## The ins and outs of relying on a LIM report and building inspection report provided by a Vendor...

Given the current property market, it is becoming more common for a Vendor (or seller) to supply a LIM report and a building inspection report to potential purchasers. While this can help potential purchasers make an unconditional offer (or an offer with less conditions) they do need to be careful when relying on these reports.

### LIM (Land Information Memorandum) report

As this is a government-issued report, the Council is required to include all the information they have in respect of a property in the LIM report. You should however note the following 3 tips:

1. Check the date of the LIM report to ensure that it is current and up to date.
2. Check with the Vendor (via the Salesperson) to see if there have been any works or any new information come to light about the property since the LIM report was issued.
3. If the property is a unit title, check that the report is for the particular unit you are looking to purchase.

### Leaders Sales Statistics July and August 2016

- **93% of properties sold for more than RV**
- **The average sale price was 29% over RV**
- **Highest sale price over RV was 69%**

### Building Inspection Report

A building inspection report is prepared by a building inspector for the Vendor. You need to be extremely careful when relying on this report. It is important that you understand any potential issues this could cause. These include the following 5 issues:

1. The contract is between the building inspector and the Vendor. This means that if the builder has made an error in this report, the builder is not liable to you for any such error. Some building inspection companies will agree to re-address the report to you so that the builder is then liable to you for any such error. You would need to make enquiries directly with the building inspector to see if this is possible. If so, it is likely that there will be an additional cost involved with doing this.
2. Ensure you know exactly what the building inspection report includes and excludes. For example, the report may exclude checking the weathertightness of a property (i.e. is it leaking). Often there will be a summary of what is covered by the report. If not, we recommend that you check this with the building inspector directly.
3. Check the date of the building inspection report to ensure that it is current and up to date.
4. Check with the Vendor (via the Salesperson) to see if there have been any works undertaken on the property since the date of the building inspection report (including any remedial work that may have been completed).
5. Check that the building inspection report was undertaken by a builder that has professional indemnity insurance and who carries out work in accordance with NZ Property Inspection Standards.

After taking into account these 5 issues, you should consider whether you are satisfied with the risks involved in relying on a building inspection report supplied by a Vendor, or whether you would prefer to obtain your own building inspection report.

(Rainey Collins July 2016)

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