Tierra & Madera

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T E C H N I C A L F A C T S H E E T

Mould in your home – what to do

Recognising the causes · recording and reporting the damage · removing small patches properly · professional remediation · prevention — for owners in Spanish communities of owners

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Purpose: What owners should do about mould in their home: recognise the causes, record and report the damage, remove small patches properly, recognise professional remediation and prevent mould. Companion to the damage report form and to explainer video 8.
Basis: German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA): Guideline on the prevention, detection and remediation of mould in buildings (December 2017, updated edition April 2024) and UBA public information · WHO: Guidelines for indoor air quality – dampness and mould (2009). Legal framework in Spain: Ley de Propiedad Horizontal Arts. 9 and 10 · Civil Code Art. 396 · Ley 50/1980 de Contrato de Seguro Arts. 16 and 17. Further reading for contractors: DGUV Information 201-028 (2022) · WTA leaflet 4-12 (2021) · CTE DB HS 1 and HS 3.
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Note: general technical information; not a substitute for an on-site inspection or legal advice. Our own presentation, not a translation of the UBA guideline.

THE ESSENTIALS IN BRIEF

1. **Mould only grows where it is too damp.** It only goes away for good once the cause of the damp has been found and removed.
2. **Painting over it is not a repair.** Paint hides the mould — and the damage you may still need to prove.
3. **Take photos first, then report it in writing to the administrator.** If the damp may be coming from the building, do not paint over, treat or remove anything before an expert (perito) has seen the damage.
4. **Remove small patches yourself only after the inspection** – or if the cause is definitely in your own home, for example the silicone joint in the shower. **Large damage** is a job for a specialist firm.

1. Where does the damp come from?

Usually it is one of three causes, often several at once.

Cause	Examples
Water from outside or from the building	a leaking terrace or roof above · cracks in the façade · leaking pipes · damp rising from the ground
Moisture in the indoor air	Cooking, showering, drying laundry and breathing put many litres of water into the air every day. When damp air meets a cold wall, the moisture condenses on it — often in corners, behind wardrobes and around window reveals.
Cold wall surfaces	poorly insulated external walls and thermal bridges cool the wall on the inside

Good to know: mould does not need visible water. It is enough for the air right at the wall to stay very humid for a long time, from roughly 70 to 80 % relative humidity.

2. Straight away: record it and report it

1. **Take photos:** first the whole room, then the spot close up, with a tape measure or folding rule next to it, and if possible the suspected origin, for example the terrace above or the façade from outside. Note the date. If the patch spreads, photograph it again.
2. **Do not paint over, treat or remove anything before an expert (perito) has seen the damage** — in any case if the damp may be coming from outside or from the building. Even small patches are evidence. If the community does not send an expert, you can commission one yourself. Only after the expert has seen the damage may you paint over it temporarily. That is not a repair: the cause still has to be removed.
3. **Report it in writing** to the administrator of your community of owners (comunidad de propietarios). You can use our free damage report form (tierra-y-madera.es/en/damage-report.html).
4. **Until it is remediated:** spend as little time in the room as possible, air it regularly and do not brush the patch dry. Larger areas can be covered with plastic sheeting.
   Health: if you or anyone in your home has symptoms you link to the mould – for example breathing, eye or nose problems – talk to your doctor. If someone in your household belongs to a risk group (section 3), avoid using the room until it is remediated – for example, do not sleep in it – and press for a quick appointment.
5. **Insurance:** if you have your own home insurance, report the damage to your insurer too, preferably in writing. The law sets seven days from when you learn of it; your policy may allow longer. Whether mould is covered depends on your policy.

3. How big is the damage?

Damage	What to do
Small: less than about 0.5 m² in total (about 70 × 70 cm), surface only, cause known	You can usually remove it yourself (section 4) – but only after the inspection, unless the cause is definitely in your own home.
Large: more than about 0.5 m², deep in the plaster, or the cause is unclear	A specialist firm should carry out the remediation; professionals should find the cause.

> **If you are allergic to mould, have asthma or another chronic respiratory disease, or a weakened immune system,** do not remove mould yourself – not even a small patch. Leave it to a specialist firm or a healthy person.

4. Removing small patches yourself

Only after the inspection (section 2, point 2). Before that, only if the cause is definitely in your own home and you are not reporting any damage – for example the silicone joint in the shower. Mould on external walls, on the ceiling or in room corners does not count, even if it looks like condensation. If in doubt, wait. Take photos first.

What	How
Protection	plastic gloves (throw them away afterwards), an FFP2 mask and safety goggles; wash your clothes afterwards. Before you start, take food, toys and clothes out of the room, close the door and open the window.
Smooth surfaces tiles, glass, gloss paint	wash with water and a household cleaner, and change the water often
Porous surfaces plaster, joints	only wipe off surface mould – with a cloth and alcohol (70 to 80 %) or a household cleaner. If the plaster is damp, soft or crumbling, it is no longer small damage: ask a professional. Keep the room well aired. Alcohol is flammable: no naked flames, no smoking.
How to work	wipe damp; do not sweep or brush dry; only use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter
Wallpaper, joints	dampen affected wallpaper and strip it off; replace badly affected silicone joints
If the patch comes back	The cause has not been removed. Ask a professional.

5. What does not help

- **Painting over it:** as long as the wall stays damp, the problem is not solved. You may only paint over it temporarily after an expert has seen the damage — and that is not a repair.
- **Anti-mould products and other biocides:** in homes they are usually not needed. They do not remove the mould — and killing it is not enough.
- **Bleach** (in Spain ‘lejía’) and other mould removers: they are biocides too. They do not get the mould out of the material, and as a spray they spread into the room air. Never mix bleach with other cleaning products – toxic gases can form (see the label).
- **Vinegar:** unsuitable on plaster and other porous surfaces.
- **Spraying or fogging products into the air:** not advised.

6. What professional remediation looks like

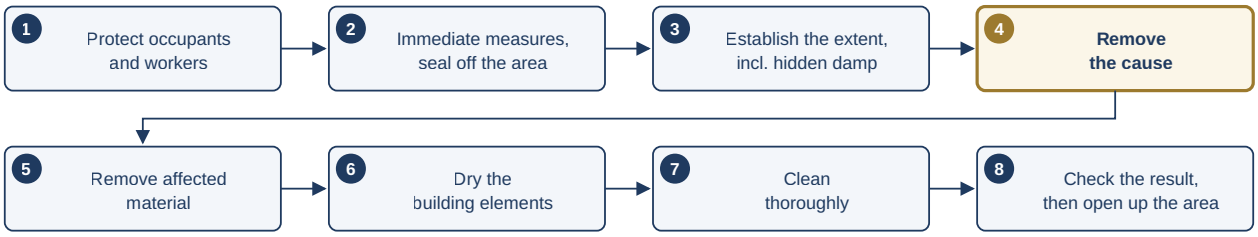


Fig. 1 — Steps of professional mould remediation according to the UBA guideline. Without step 4, the mould comes back.

7. Prevention

- **Airing properly is the most important thing you can do yourself.** Open windows fully rather than leaving them tilted for a long time — better still, windows on opposite sides at the same time (cross-ventilation).
- **Ground-floor or partly below-ground flats and cool rooms:** on warm, humid days air early in the morning or late in the evening, not in the heat of the day. Otherwise the moisture in the outside air condenses on the cool walls.
- **Bathroom and kitchen:** air straight after showering or cooking, with the window fully open and the door closed. Wipe water off the tiles.
- **Rooms you rarely use:** air them too. This also applies to homes that stand empty for long periods.
- **Laundry:** dry it outdoors where possible; indoors only with good airing.
- **Furniture** against external walls: move it a few centimetres away from the wall, ideally on legs.
- **In the cooler season,** do not let rooms stay cold for long periods.
- **A simple hygrometer** shows how humid the room air is. 40 to 60 % relative humidity is a good range. Next to cold wall surfaces the air is more humid than the hygrometer in the middle of the room shows.
- **Gutters, terrace drains and the façade** should be checked regularly. In a community of owners this is the community's job, organised by the administrator. Keep the drain of your own terrace clear yourself.

8. Who is responsible?

Where does the damp come from?	Who acts
communal parts of the building — for example roof, façade, shared pipes	The association must have the cause removed.
a neighbouring flat	Inform your neighbour and the administrator in writing. Your neighbour must make good damage caused by neglect in their flat. Pipes are usually communal up to the flat they serve.
your own home — for example condensation from too little airing	That is up to you. But condensation often has building causes too, for example cold spots in the façade or ceiling. Then the community may be responsible – an expert (perito) clarifies this.

Often it is not clear-cut. An expert (perito) then establishes the cause. Even so, report the damage early and in writing.

9. Find out more

- German Environment Agency (UBA): Guideline on mould in buildings, April 2024 — official English version · German original
- WHO guidelines for indoor air quality: dampness and mould (2009) — who.int

La Gomera, 12 November 2026

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