

Leaks / Moisture Intrusion Checklist

A walkthrough for noticing hidden water movement before visible damage appears.

One page at a time. Add this sheet to your home environment binder and compare observations as you go.

01 Hidden water movement inside a building

Moisture intrusion describes water entering a structure through leaks, seepage, condensation, or appliance failures and accumulating in concealed spaces. Supply lines, window frames, foundation walls, drain connections, and appliances are all common entry points. The damage develops slowly and often stays out of view for months.

02 Staining, warping, and air that feels damp

Water staining on ceilings or walls, bubbling or peeling paint, warped flooring or baseboards near fixtures, and white chalky residue on basement concrete are the most visible signals. A persistent damp smell - especially in a basement, crawlspace, or around an appliance - often appears before any surface shows damage.

03 Damage develops behind finished surfaces

Most plumbing runs inside walls and under floors. A slow joint leak can saturate wood framing for months before a stain reaches the surface - and by then, secondary biological growth is often already established. Standard home inspections are not designed to detect moisture behind finished surfaces.

04 Where, after what, and how it changes

Pay attention to whether any sign appears or worsens after rain, after appliance use, or after temperature changes. Note the location, how long it has been present, and whether it has changed over time. A moisture meter reading in a suspect area gives you a specific number to return to.

HOME ENVIRONMENT BINDER / OBSERVATION SHEET

Leaks / Moisture Intrusion Checklist

Date checked: _____ Areas covered: _____

Check anything you notice. This is a record of observations, not conclusions - there are no wrong answers.

Visible signs

- ☐ Water staining, bubbling or peeling paint, or warped flooring near fixtures or on ceilings
Example: Yellow ring on the ceiling below the upstairs bath - appeared after a wet spring.
- ☐ White chalky residue (efflorescence) on basement walls or concrete floors
- ☐ Soft, spongy, or discolored drywall or flooring near sinks, toilets, or appliances

Moisture & humidity

- ☐ Persistent damp smell in a basement, crawlspace, laundry area, or around an appliance
- ☐ Condensation on windows, pipes, or walls - especially in lower levels
- ☐ Moisture meter readings taken in any area of concern

Sources & history

- ☐ Window, roof, or foundation leaks - past or ongoing
- ☐ Dishwasher, washing machine, or refrigerator with visible or suspected leak history
- ☐ Symptoms that worsen after rain or during periods of high humidity

ROOMS OR AREAS OF HIGHEST CONCERN

WHEN SYMPTOMS FEEL STRONGEST / WEATHER, TIME, ROOM, ACTIVITY

NOTES

A checklist is a snapshot. The patterns that matter most tend to appear when you compare one across weeks, seasons, and rooms.