

BEAT THE DAMP BY IMPROVING WATER DRAINAGE

During the cooler months, keeping an eye on drainage under your home is vital. Often water drainage is overlooked until substantial heavy rain alerts you to a problem. If you should discover this, immediate steps need to be taken. Inadequate drainage that is not addressed may eventually lead to rising damp and rotting timber floors, and can also make conditions attractive to termites.

Why is Drainage important?

When it rains, some water will naturally seep into the ground. The rest of the water will make its way through drainage systems. As a property owner, you are responsible for drainage systems on your property such as roof gutters, downpipes and pipelines that generally connect to council drainage systems. Without proper drainage, water will naturally run to the lowest part of your property. Water collecting outside your home can cause all sorts of structural problems.

During property inspections, our registered Inspectors come across common drainage issues on a regular basis. Some of these problems include:

- **Poor Drainage**

Poor drainage can be caused by built up garden beds, sloping ground or blocked drains. If this occurs, water may be directed underneath the house. Trees and garden beds requiring heavy watering should be kept well away from the house. Additionally, when trees and large shrubs are placed near buildings, their roots can cause considerable damage to drainage pipes and house footings. If garden beds are placed in close proximity to the house, they should be sealed with plastic and contain only a few small plants to minimise the effects of water drainage.

- **Poor Design**

A poor layout and/or design may cause sufficient ventilation to sub-floor areas. Inadequate sub-floor ventilation can cause a build up of humidity which leads to rising damp, condensation dampness and rotting of timber floors. The flow of ventilation to the sub-floor can also be obstructed by debris so it's important to clear this area to prevent any dampness from developing.

- **Poor Maintenance**

Inadequate maintenance around your home usually results in blocked drains, overflowing gutters, faulty flashings and inadequate ventilation. You may be surprised to know that water that collects on the roof has a direct impact on moisture on their foundation. Rain and hail can all result in moisture forming under the layers of your roof which can lead to leaks and mould.

For this reason, a metal/lead flashing is placed over junctions between roofing materials and the building construction, with the aim of deflecting water away and to form a barrier against water seeping into the house.

It is also important to ensure that roof guttering is clear of debris such as leaf litter and silt. Removing debris will help prevent any water backing up and flowing back into roof spaces or under your home.

- **Falling Damp**

Falling damp is often the result of poorly installed roof drainage. For this reason, it's essential to regularly examine roofs, gutters, flashings and downpipes to reveal any potential sources of water leaks. Falling damp occurs where blocked or leaking roof gutters lead to water penetration into eaves, fascia, windows and wall frames which may result in decay. Obvious signs of falling damp are mould patches high on walls that blister, discolour and peel paintwork. Falling damp sometimes causes a watermark





or damp patch that will become more prevalent during periods of heavy rain. In most cases, a property inspection will draw attention to a falling damp issue and our registered Inspector can suggest ways to repair the problem.

- **Mould and Moisture**

Water damage can cause mildew and mould and major problems can arise. Mould can grow over time and if unnoticed for a long period, it can cause serious health issues such as allergies, asthma and respiratory infections.

In addition, moisture may create a humid atmosphere that will attract termites which can cause major structural issues to your home. Once a termite nest is established, they feed on wood, such as rotted tree stumps and wood off-cuts. Termites like to avoid light and maintain a warm temperature and humidity and will travel up walls and into roofs, leaving a trail of damage. An inspection will assist in detecting and preventing damage from termites before it becomes a major problem.

- **Paths/ Driveway Water Damage**

Paths and concrete pavements should be constructed in a way that will not impede surface water flowing away from the home. It's important to be careful when installing new pathways around your home, ensuring that levels fall away from the house. A proper water drainage system needs to be in place for paths and driveways to efficiently remove excess water. Otherwise, poor drainage will cause them to shift and consequently unstable.

By improving the drainage under your home, you'll not only have peace of mind but you will also have added value to your property. Drainage problems can be addressed with routine inspections and proper maintenance. SPI Property Inspections can carry out a water drainage assessment as part of our overall building condition report. Our inspector will compile a report that documents each of the items covered in the inspection and their relative condition.

Any faults /issues that we identify will be highlighted and supported by photography. We will also outline our recommendations for the best course of action.

If the condition of your water drainage is a concern, contact us at SPI Property Inspections. We can give you professional advice and put your mind at rest.

Phone us today on 1300 721 032 or email us on info@spipropertyinspections.com.au.

