

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF VENTILATION IN PREVENTING DAMPNESS IN MALAYSIAN HOMES

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Introduction

As a tropical country, Malaysia experiences a generally humid climate with high temperatures. This creates ideal conditions for dampness in homes ^[1]. As a result of this dampness, issues such as mould, musty smells, and peeling paint can develop. If these problems are left untreated for a longer period, they can even lead to structural damage, including wall cracks, water leaks, and other issues that may require building repair or waterproofing repair.

To take care of these problems, proper ventilation is necessary for removing stale and humid air while allowing fresh air to flow continuously. This helps keep the indoor spaces dry and comfortable. Effective ventilation, helps keep humidity in check, whereby less moisture means fewer opportunities for mould and mildew to thrive. Additionally, it ensures that the indoor air is more swiftly exchanged, improving air quality for homeowners. This article discusses the vital components of efficient ventilation and how it works to draw the lines of dampness away from homes in Malaysia.

The Link between Humidity and Dampness in Malaysian Homes

In Malaysia's tropical climate, high humidity is the primary source of moisture in homes ^[2]. This persistent moisture, often amplified by rain and condensation, can damage the home's structure, foster mould growth, and lead to health problems. The constant humidity indoors builds up moisture when trapped within enclosed spaces with minimal air movement. When warm, moist air becomes trapped in enclosed spaces with little air circulation, it can build up and lead to condensation on cool surfaces like walls and windows. This process creates water droplets, leaving some areas damp. The dampness over time can stimulate mould or mildew growth, which in turn can decay construction materials and pose health risks, such as stained surfaces and allergic reactions. Without proper ventilation, these issues can worsen, making it essential to improve airflow in critical areas of the house.

How Moisture Is Reduced by Proper Ventilation

Proper ventilation is crucial for eliminating moisture by expelling humid, stale air and bringing in its place fresh and dry air ^[3]. This process prevents air from condensing and remaining damp. A continuous air exchange reduces relative humidity, which in turn decreases the chances of mildew and mould development. Opening windows can enhance ventilation, especially when the weather is dry and outdoor humidity is low. Should you wish for an outdoor breeze with moisture-churning benefits, cross-ventilation (by opening different sides of the room) can be effective.

Additionally, exhaust fans, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, can quickly remove moist air, preventing it from settling and impacting other areas of the house. For houses where circulation of natural air is a mediocre, mechanical ventilation options, such as dehumidifiers or air circulators, comes in handy to maintaining ideal humidity levels. Ultimately, it is essential to ensure that moist air is not trapped inside, as this can lead to damp surfaces and potential issues.

Necessity of Proper Ventilation in Bathrooms and Kitchens

Proper ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens is essential for maintaining healthy indoor air quality and preventing moisture-related issues ^[4]. Both areas tend to suffer from dampness due to constant water use and steam generation. For instance, steam from a hot shower rises into the air and clings to the walls, ceiling, and mirrors in the bathroom. Without proper ventilation to remove moisture, moulds will start growing on grout, tiles, and painted surfaces. One can install an exhaust fan or just keep a window slightly open while showering to help get rid of excess moisture.

Similarly, kitchens are capable of producing moisture through cooking, boiling water, and using appliances like dishwashers. If moisture is not vented properly, steam from cooking can cling to the cabinets and walls. A range hood or an exhaust fan should be used while cooking to direct the moist air outside instead of allowing it to circulate indoors. Keeping kitchen windows open also works wonders for letting the steam out when one is cooking or boiling water. Implementing these simple measures can greatly reduce dampness issues over time.

Long-Term Benefits of Adequate Ventilation Processes

A well-ventilated house is essential not only for preventing immediate dampness but also to maintain the structural integrity of the home over the long term. If the moisture persists for a considerable time, it can lead to rotting wood frame, rusting metal fixtures, and peeling paint. Continuous airflow helps homeowners avoid these costly repairs and increase the longevity of the building materials.

In addition to structural benefits, proper ventilation also improves indoor air quality by eliminating musty odours and reducing allergens caused by mould and mildew. A well-ventilated home is fresher and more comfortable, which works towards improving the health of the occupants. In Malaysia, where humidity levels are high, considering and implementing proper ventilation proves to be one of the simplest and most practical yet effective ways of keeping the living place dry and cool.

Conclusion

Dampness is a persistent issue in homes due to the high humidity of Malaysia, but it can be relatively easy to control. By using window openings, exhaust fans, and ensuring good air circulation in dampness-prone areas like bathrooms and kitchens, mould, mildew, and structural deterioration can be avoided. Adopting these practices will surely put the house in a healthier and much more comfortable environment, and save the homeowner thousands of Ringgit in future repairs. Given the importance of reducing dampness and enhancing overall comfort, proper ventilation should not be overlooked.

References:

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