

WHAT IS DRY ROT?

- Dry rot is a weakening of wood caused by one of several species of fungus.
- The fungus digests parts of the wood that give the wood strength and stiffness.
- Weakened wood is typically somewhat dry and brittle, hence the name dry rot.
- Wood decay caused by the fungus can ruin any wooden structures inside or outside your home.
- Dry rot usually results from too much moisture in contact with the wood.
- If not stopped, the dry rot fungus will so weaken wood that it may eventually disintegrate.



PREVENTING DRY ROT

- The most important way to prevent dry rot damage is to reduce or eliminate excess moisture.
- This may be as simple as repairing a leaky pipe or as complicated as stopping water infiltration through a basement foundation.
- A common cause of dry rot is wood in contact with soil. Keep soil 6" away from wooden surfaces.
- Ensure proper drainage if using planters on wooden decks; when watering plants, moisture can be trapped in the wood.
- Bathrooms, attic, and kitchen should have proper ventilation installed to remove excess moisture from the air.
- Repairs should be made with treated or rot-resistant wood.
- Make certain any wood for outdoor use is primed or sealed on all sides.
- Direct water from rain gutter downspouts away from the sides of the house.
- Check plumbing fixtures, including underneath vanities and cabinets as well as around toilets for leaks.
- Keep bolts, screws, and nails free of rust.
- Position lawn sprinklers so they do not spray onto your home's exterior.

If damage is found, contact a State of California-licensed architect or engineer (structural/civil) to inspect and provide plans to replace any damaged wood that has become structurally weakened.

Remember: building permits are required prior to start of any work.



IDENTIFYING DRY ROT

- Locate and inspect the wooden surfaces of your property such as: balconies, decks, siding, fences, guardrails, stairs, and structural supports.
- Initially, the fungus looks like cotton wool.
- Check for sunken or shrunken wood.
- Notice darkening and cracks in the wood structure or blistering paint.
- Check for large, deep cracks in wooden surfaces.
- Look for affected wood that has flat skin-like growth which may resemble the outside of a mushroom with shades of silver and gray. Often patterned with patches of light purple or yellow, it peels easily.
- Dry rot can often hide in timbers that are concealed behind sheetrock and other wall coverings.
- Check for loose or damaged walking surfaces, including exterior stairs.
- Loose support posts and rails may be a sign of destruction from dry rot.
- Check for elements associated with waterproofing.



CA SENATE BILL SB 721

(Chapter 445, Stats. 2018)

What Buildings Must Be Inspected?

- Buildings containing three or more multi-family dwelling units that have:
 - Balconies, decks, porches, stairways, walkways, and entry structures that extend beyond exterior walls of the building and rely in whole or in substantial part on wood or wood-based products for structural support or stability; walking surfaces that are elevated more than 6' above ground level; and balconies designed for human occupancy or use.
- Buildings that are proposed for conversion to condominiums to be sold to the public after January 1, 2019, must be inspected prior to the first close of escrow.
- Inspections of balconies, decks, porches, stairways, walkways, guardrails, and entries as described above must be inspected by January 1, 2025 and requires subsequent inspections every six years.

Who Can Perform Inspections of Elevated Exterior Elements?

- A State of California-licensed architect or civil/structural engineer.
- General contractors holding any or all A, B, or C-5 licenses with at least five years of experience in multi-story wood frame buildings.
- Certified building inspector or building official not employed by local jurisdiction while performing inspections.
- <https://caanet.org/kb/balcony-inspection-law/>



*CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW
FIRE DEPARTMENT*

DRY ROT IDENTIFICATION AND PREVENTION



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Call 9-1-1 for Emergencies