

Subsidence - spotting the signs

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Educating customers on how to spot the early signs of subsidence may mean less cost in repairs, and less stress too.



Here are a few things for your customers to look out for:

While these signs alone won't guarantee subsidence, keep an eye out for a crack that:

- Is more than 3mm thick (thicker than a 10p coin)
- Is diagonal, and wider at the top and slimmer at the bottom
- Spreads from ground level, upwards
- You can see from both inside and outside the house
- Is near doors and windows
- Happens where an extension joins the main house
- Spreads under the damp-proof course. This is a layer of waterproof material in the wall of a building near the ground, used to prevent rising damp.
- Appears after a prolonged period of hot and dry weather
- Opens and/or closes, depending on the season

Other signs of subsidence may include:

- Wallpaper creasing at the joins and where the wall meets the ceiling
- Doors and windows sticking as frames warp

Preventing and mitigating subsidence

Letting your customers know how to prevent and reduce subsidence from happening can help to educate them on future issues, and to also save money in the long run:

Trees & vegetation

- Find trees within a distance that's roughly three times the width of your building. Willows, oaks, poplars are the highest risk
- Regular pruning to reduce the amount of water the roots take from the soil
- Consider removing trees if they're causing active damage
- Monitor trees and vegetation during droughts

Drainage & water management

- Keep gutters and downpipes clear
- Extend downpipes 1-1.5m from building
- Make sure that your garden slopes away from the property, where possible
- Fix leaking pipes as soon as possible
- Make sure that there's proper drainage, to help drain rainwater away

If you suspect there is subsidence to your property then get in touch with your insurers for advice.

It's also worth reminding your customers what is (and isn't covered) on their policy, so that they're fully informed if they do have any subsidence at their property.