

King Storage

Protecting your stored items in storage

Most people will complete their storage unit tenancy without any issues at all, however in the unfortunate event that you experience any of the major risks having your goods insured is the first thing you can do to protect your goods. That is why here at King Storage we stipulate that all goods stored must be insured either through your own policy or through our own insurance option.

Just relying on insurance alone is not enough and, even with the correct insurance policy in place, there are always some items that cannot be replaced.

Fortunately, there are some incredibly easy steps that will ensure your goods are as protected and are as safe as they can be which will help in minimising any risks and potential damage.

Considerations:

Choose the right type of storage

- Our internal units are perfect for household contents where our external units are more suited to the business customer. For valuable items that are sensitive to changes in environment such as antiques or fine art we would recommend storing these in a climate-controlled environment

Choose the right size unit

- By choosing the right size unit you can manage your stored items so they are not all stacked on top of each other which might cause damage over time. With the right size unit items can be arranged with a little more space which would improve airflow around your goods

Prepare items for storage

- A good first step is to make sure everything is clean as possible
- Give wooden furniture a clean and polish with wax to help to repel any moisture in the air and prevent condensation damaging wooden surfaces.
- Don't store items made of wood, fabric, leather or metal wrapped in plastic as this will not allow any trapped moisture in the air to escape. Using breathable, natural materials to cover and protect items is a much better idea. Cotton sheets, blankets, cardboard and paper will all be better choices than plastic.
- Items like curtains, soft furnishings and textiles should not be stored in plastic bags. Again, allowing any moisture in the air to become trapped will exacerbate potential issues with mould and mildew forming.
- Leather items – whether they are larger items like furniture or smaller things like bags, shoes and belts, should be treated with a leather protector which is moisture repellent to protect them.

Choose the right packaging

- Keeping your items safe and secure whilst in self-storage is the main objective when it comes to packaging. Consider the size of box against the weight of the goods you want to store, for example, large cardboard boxes filled with books, records or magazines will result in heavy items that are difficult to handle and stack, even with a comprehensive insurance policy the risks associated with damage due to collapsed boxes won't be covered! A large box under-filled also loses strength in terms of 'stack-ability' and so smaller boxes are much better for heavier items.
- For items that are prone to mould and mildew (such as clothing and books) ditch the cardboard completely and go for plastic containers with lids that can be sealed with tape to ensure they are airtight. Cardboard is a natural absorbent and will attract any dampness in the environment -

transferring it to all those rare first edition books or vintage clothes. If you are looking to store fabric items, make sure they are all clean and dry before packing as this will help eliminate any risks of damage from mould or vermin.

Organize & Pack

One last task to complete before you can confidently say you have protected everything within your power is to make sure your storage unit is packed correctly. Rather than chucking in boxes randomly, having a method means no more madness when you want to retrieve an item(s).

- The first rule when utilising space within the storage unit is to **pack the bulky items and heavier boxes first**. By placing these heavier items around the edge of the unit (against the walls/side) you will create a protective barrier for the smaller items whilst maximising space. Remember to pack your most used items nearest to the door, believe us - you do not want to empty your entire self-storage unit just to locate some paperwork you put at the back of the unit.
- If you are trying to utilise the space - once all the regular shaped items are stacked, use the smaller items to **fill any spaces or unused gaps**. Packing items tightly will help to balance your boxes and prevent any toppling over.
- If your self-storage provider agrees, **placing shelving and racking** in your storage unit will help you to organise those odd shaped items that don't quite fit in a box. This can also be a good way to keep cardboard boxes off the floor to minimise moisture.
- Using **dust sheets to cover larger items** like furniture will help to keep the dust and dirt off. If you need to store items directly on the floor, then consider placing old carpet or even another dust sheet on the ground to protect the item from scratches.
- Lastly, **make sure you aren't storing anything hazardous or dangerous** as not only are these items prohibited, resulting in breaking the terms of your lease, but your storage insurance will also be invalid. If you are not sure what can and can't be stored in a storage unit then check your lease agreement or ask us. For storage insurance take a look at our policy to see [what is and isn't covered](#).

Mould and Mildew:

Mould and Mildew love moisture, spread fast and thrive if left untreated. Mould and mildew can grow on most materials including wood, fabrics, paper, stone and even plastics. These fungi's will gradually break down affected materials if left long enough.

Causes:

Mould & mildew are organic and will develop where the appropriate spores or seeds are present in circumstances that allow the organisms to grow. The "seeds" are ubiquitous within most households and will grow on most surfaces, particularly porous ones, requiring minimal moisture levels and preferring locations with low airflow. Lack of preparation can increase the occurrence of mould and mildew which has often been accelerated by items not being clean or dry when put into storage.

Lack of Preparation:

Moisture left by owners within their effects increases dampness within storage units. Examples of this are clothes not correctly dried after washing, beds not fully aired after being slept in or fridges and freezers not fully dried after defrosting, washer machines not fully drained and allowed to dry. Moisture can also be brought in on goods getting wet during transit.

Items not cleaned before entering storage can accelerate the occurrence of mould and mildew by items such as dirty laundry or food remnants being left in and on sofas and other furniture.

Unfortunately, when it comes to mould and mildew, King Storage are unable to cover your items for any damage caused by mould (this is a standard exclusion and not specific to King Storage) unless it can be reasonably demonstrated damage arose as a direct result of an insured peril, however there are some measures that you can take to minimise the risk. Taking a little extra care over your packing and following the steps below will help your items to stay as mould and mildew free as possible:

Clean and dry:

Books, clothes, art, vinyl records, paperwork, fabrics – whatever you are storing, it is essential in all circumstances to prepare your items for storage. Fabrics are good at trapping moisture so make sure they have ample time to thoroughly dry before packing. Make sure stains are removed as any small spots may grow and become more problematic if left to fester

Prepare and pack:

What you chose to pack your items in will be dependent on what you are storing. If storing clothes, you would be better to opt for plastic boxes with airtight lids to ensure that no moisture can access them whilst in storage. If you are storing art, you should opt to cover the painting/print in a heavy breathable cloth rather than plastic (as this will trap moisture). You can also buy silica gel packs to place in the boxes (silica gel sachets absorb the moisture within the sachet without turning it into a liquid residue)

Most items should be fine if packed in new, clean dry sturdy boxes and kept off the floor however below is a summary of some specific items that require slightly different storage solutions:

- Clothes/ fabrics – Ensure they are 100% clean and dry and then pack in plastic airtight storage boxes
- Paintings/art – Wrap in heavy breathable cloth then place in a specialist art box (wood or cardboard)
- Electrical Goods – Before wrapping and packaging your electrical goods you should give them a thorough clean & dust, remove any batteries and take a back-up of any data. Avoid moisture ideally by using plastic crates with sachets of silica gel. If possible, use original packaging as this is the perfect way to store your electrical goods
- Furniture – Protect any delicate items with bubble wrap, keep off the floor and use dust sheets to cover
- Wood – Clean and protect with polish or wax then cover with dust sheet
- Leather items – Should be treated with a leather protector which is moisture repellent
- Sofas & Mattresses – Clean and cover with protective sheet
- Books – Pack in a clean, dry, strong corrugated card box or even better a sealed plastic container, line the box with tissue paper or packing paper (not newspaper) and ensure books are dust free before packing. Pack standing up and allow space as they will need airflow
- Vinyl Records - Store your vinyl records in special record crates or boxes (which are the right size), upright on their edges or in special vinyl storage racks. Use protective exterior sleeves if possible
- Washing machines and fridges themselves can create mould and mildew. Ensure that all goods (including hoses) are cleaned and thoroughly dried prior to storage
- Use moisture absorbent materials to protect your items such as silica gels sachets
- Always ensure that when moving your items into storage that they are completely dry if it has rained during transit.

Air flow:

Humidity is the amount of water vapour in the air and mould and mildew thrive in a damp environment. One of the simplest things you can do to reduce the risk of your items being affected by mould and mildew, is to create air flow around your storage container

- Don't stack all your boxes tightly together or push them against the sides of the storage unit
- Do leave space between items as this encourage air flow and help dry out the air, thus reducing moisture

Raise your items:

Regardless of what type of storage unit you have rented, making sure your items are off the ground/floor will help air flow and help towards reducing the risk of fungi. Storing smaller boxes on shelving units help keep them protected.

Placing items of furniture in wooden pallets will help to reduce moisture being absorbed from the floor

Check on your items:

Make regular trips to check everything is in order with your items. Move items around to help with air flow. The sooner any damp issues are detected, the more salvageable your items will be, reducing the risk of mould and mildew spreading.

Pests, vermin and rodents:

Self-storage facilities face a unique set of circumstances that can make them especially attractive to pests. Unlike homes and businesses, storage units can go long periods without being checked by the renter, allowing an infestation to grow without disturbance. Many insects can fit through an opening as thin as a credit card and mice can squeeze through holes as small as a coin. Although as Self-Storage operators we implement regular preventative measures such as bait boxes and traps we have little control over what's brought into units. Be aware of items that are attractive to pests; such as food, live plants and even bags or boxes of paper goods and clothes / fabrics.

However, there are some measures that you can take to minimise the risk.

Tips to pest-proof your stored items:

- Store items in plastic, sealed containers rather than cardboard boxes to prevent pests like rodents from nesting inside
- Clean all items you plan on storing prior to packing. Remove any residue from clothing and furniture, and do not leave crumbs or food remnants on any items or inside furniture or appliances
- Protect soft furnishings by wrapping them in strong plastic sheeting before you put them away. Not only will it offer an extra layer of protection against dust and marks, if there are any mice in your space, furnishings will be protected from droppings and stains as well
- Wash items like clothing and linens on a hot temperature before storing to eliminate pests or pest eggs
- Do not store perishable food items or live plants inside storage units as these attract pests
- Before placing items into your unit, thoroughly inspect them to ensure pests are not hiding in any boxes or items
- Store boxes on a raised pallet to prevent smaller pests from finding refuge underneath
- Regularly clean your stored items, regularly move items around the storage unit and check for signs of pests
- If you notice any signs of an infestation, contact us immediately to eliminate the issue promptly

What you can and What you can't put into Self Storage Units

For the safety of all our Staff and Customers, we don't accept any of these items in our Self-Storage Units and Containers: -

- COMBUSTIBLE, FLAMMABLE, HAZARDOUS OR TOXIC MATERIALS – Including: - petrol, compressed gas, propane tanks, kerosene, lamp and motor oil, acid, grease, corrosives, fireworks or explosives, fertilizers, paint, cleaners, chemicals or hazardous, toxic or biological waste. Asbestos or products which may contain asbestos are also not permitted.
- ANIMALS – Living or dead
- STOLEN ITEMS/ILLEGAL GOODS – if you don't legally own it, you can't legally store it.
- FIREARMS/AMMUNITIONS
- PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS – this includes pet foods, bird seeds etc. These could attract vermin
- LIVE PLANTS – lack of sunlight and water will cause your plants to die plus could attract vermin
- CASH

The Insurance Exclusions

Mould, mildew, and damp are excluded from insurance policies covering effects stored within storage units along with atmospheric causes, gradual deterioration. It should be noted that the exclusion of damp does not relate to water damage resulting from storm, flood or burst pipes which are insured. Please refer to your License Agreement and Terms and Conditions for your opted insurance.

These particular risks are excluded as they are the type of damage that will inevitably occur in storage, particularly long-term storage. Insurance is provided to cover fortuitous events. Insurance companies will not provide cover against damage which will inevitably occur or where damage occurs as a result of a lack of care or preparation shown by the owners of the effects.