

# Moisture Meter Reading Chart

Free field reference for water-damage & restoration readings · iDry Columbus

614-810-0000

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Most pin meters (Protimeter Surveymaster, Mini, General Tools MMD4E) read a **Wood Moisture Equivalent (WME)** scale on every material — the number reflects what an equivalent piece of wood would read. Use the bands below to triage; confirm with a calibrated %MC reading on wood where accuracy matters.

## Reading bands (WME % — pin meters, all materials)

Band	Range	What it means	Action
Normal / Dry	≤ 17	Material is at or near equilibrium	No action needed
Elevated	17 – 20	Borderline; monitor or recheck	Re-read; check adjacent areas
Concern	20 – 28	Active moisture present	Find the source; begin drying
Action / Wet	≥ 28	Saturated; mold risk within 24–48h	Professional drying recommended

## Know your scale before you trust the number

**%MC — Moisture Content** — True % of water by weight. Most accurate, but the meter must be set to the right material/species.

**WME — Wood Moisture Equivalent** — What most pin meters show on any material: the reading a piece of wood would give at that moisture. Use the bands above.

**REL — Relative / Comparative** — Pinless/search scales (0–999 or 0–100) are signal strength, NOT a percentage. Use only to compare a wet area against a known-dry one.

## Material notes

**Drywall / Plaster:** Porous and fast-wicking. A pin reading >17 WME usually means active intrusion, not surface humidity.

**Wood framing & studs:** The reference material. Kiln-dried framing sits 8–12% MC; >20% sustained risks rot and mold.

**Concrete & slab:** Pin meters read WME-equivalent only; for slab moisture use RH-in-slab probes or calcium-chloride testing.

**OSB / plywood sheathing:** Swells and delaminates when wet; treat ≥28 as replace-not-dry on structural sheathing.

**Hardwood flooring:** Compare board MC to subfloor; a >4% gap predicts cupping even when both read "dry."

**Central Ohio field note:** Summer humidity here regularly tops 70% RH. Non-AC basements and crawl spaces show elevated *pinless* readings that reflect ambient air, not wet material — pin meters are more reliable in those conditions. Always read a known-dry reference in the same space.

Free reference from iDry Columbus — water, mold, odor & hoarding restoration. Readings in the red? Get a free inspection.

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General field reference, not a substitute for professional assessment. Confirm critical decisions with calibrated testing.