



Condensation and Mould Growth

Advice to Tenants

The Most common cause of damp/mould growth inside houses is condensation.

Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and make timber window frames rot.

Damp housing encourages the growth of mould and mites.

This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you keep it to a minimum, thus reducing the risk of dampness and mould growth.

What is Condensation?

Condensation is dampness occurring when air laden with water vapour cools on contact with a cold surface, you notice it when you see your breath on cold days or in the bathroom on mirrors or tile surfaces.

Condensation frequently occurs during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and in areas of the dwelling where there is little movement of air.

Condensation is frequently found near or on windows, cold wall surfaces and in or behind cupboards or wardrobes. Also it often forms on north facing walls.

Is Your Dampness Condensation?

Does it leave a tidemark? – If so, it is not condensation and you should trace the source of a leak or dampness from rain seeping through windows or rising dampness due to a defective or missing damp proof course.

How to Minimise Condensation

Produce Less Moisture

Ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture often very quickly.

- Cover boiling pans and turn kettles off after use.
- Wipe down windows and sills every morning, wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.
- Avoid paraffin and portable gas heaters as these add moisture to the air in the dwelling.
- Dry washing outdoors or in the bathroom with the door closed, window open or fan turned on.
- Vent tumble dryers using proper vent kits or use a self-condensing type.

Ventilate to Remove Moisture

- Keep a small window or trickle ventilator open when the room is in use.
- In particular, ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when you are using them.
- Prevent the damp air spreading by keeping kitchen and bathroom doors closed when the room is in use or when it is still steamy after use.
- Open curtains for at least 4 or 5 hours each day, it allows moisture to get through any window vents.
- Do not completely draught-proof windows in kitchens and bathrooms especially.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes, do not put too many things in them so preventing air circulation. Where possible put them on internal walls.

Keep Your Home Warm

- Heat your home at low levels for a long time rather than high levels for short periods; this will ensure that fewer cold surfaces form in the home. Heat the home even when there is no one there to at least 10 C (50 F). Keep background heating on all the time during winter months.
- When the house is occupied it should ideally be heated to 21 C (70 F), below 16 C (61 F) there is a risk of hypothermia (according to Help the Aged).
- Heat using a dry heat source, for example gas central heating or electric storage heaters or a fitted gas fire. Do not use paraffin or portable gas heaters.
- Insulation and sensible draught proofing will help to keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills.

Dealing with Mould Growth

- If mould starts to grow on walls, clean them with bleach or a fungicidal wash.
- Try to ensure that condensation does not occur on a regular basis.
- Mould on washable surfaces can be removed with a fungicide solution readily available from stores.
- Other items such as fabric materials can often be washed, although this may not always remove mould staining.

Points to Remember

- Produce less moisture
- Ventilate to remove moisture
- Heat your home a little more