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Transforming Lives

# Condensation and Mould





## Advice to residents

Damp can cause mould growth on walls, furniture and clothes and can also cause window and door frames to rot. Damp also encourages the development of house dust mites, which, together with mould growth, can increase the risk of respiratory illness. Dampness in housing may have a number of origins, but is often caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, thereby reducing the risk of dampness and subsequent mould growth.

### What is condensation?

Condensation is a type of dampness that occurs when air laden with water vapour cools on contact with a cold surface. You notice water vapour when you see your breath on cold days or in the bathroom on mirrors or tile surfaces. Condensation most frequently occurs during cold weather and appears particularly in areas of the dwelling where there is little movement of air. Condensation is frequently found near or on windows, some wall surfaces and in or behind cupboards or wardrobes. Also, it often forms on north facing walls.

### Is it condensation?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. Damp can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows

- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- Rising damp due to a defective damp-course or because there is no damp-course. surfaces and in or behind cupboards or wardrobes. Also, it often forms on north facing walls. These causes of damp often leave a tidemark. If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, then it is probably condensation.

## How to minimise condensation

Produce Less Moisture:-

Ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture, often very quickly. To minimise the production of moisture you should:

- Cover boiling pans of water in the kitchen.
- 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 and with the window open or fan turned on.
- Vent tumble dryers to the outside using proper vent kits, or use a self-condensing type of dryer.

## Ventilate to remove moisture

- Keep a small window or trickle ventilator open when the room is in use.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when you are using them. Ideally fit a humidistat controlled fan, one that will operate automatically at a set humidity level. They are cheap to run and effective. (Humidity is measured on a scale of 1-100 and is defined as the amount of water vapour in the atmosphere).
- Prevent the warm moist air spreading by keeping kitchen and bathroom doors closed when the room is in use.
- Do not completely draught-proof windows in kitchens and bathrooms.
- 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 few cold surfaces are in the home. Consider keeping the heating on low even when there is no one there.
- 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

- 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 DIY stores. The use of household bleach only provides a temporary solution.
- Other items such as materials can often be washed, although this may not always remove the mould staining.



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