



Preventing damp and condensation in your home

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Problems and prevention of condensation and damp in your home

Condensation can cause mould growth in your home. Severe condensation can cause damage to your home. Condensation and its effects are the responsibility of the tenant. This guide is here to help you identify, understand and control condensation in your home.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air; however this cannot always be seen. Condensation develops when moist air in the home comes into contact with cold internal surfaces such as external wall, single glazed windows, cold water pipes, lintels or window reveals. As air cools, it can hold less moisture, so droplets of water begin to form, especially on cold surfaces, this is called condensation.

Identifying Condensation

Condensation will leave moisture on cold walls and surfaces. A black coloured mould usually accompanies this moisture. Mould growth can affect walls, ceilings and window frames, as well as your clothes, bedding and decorations.

Why do I have condensation?

Condensation can develop during many daily activities for example cooking, showering, and drying clothes on radiators. When the moist air produces during these activities, they settle on cold surfaces, walls and ceilings can soak up the drops of water causing dampness. It will occur behind furniture and in cupboards on external walls where there is little air movement.

Why is condensation and dampness a problem?

If left untreated, condensation can lead to many problems. On the surface mould can grow on ceilings, walls, furniture and even on clothes. A more serious problem may not show at first, but if dampness develops, it can lead to wood rot. It will also damage any surface that is corrosive such as older radiators.

Is all dampness a result of condensation?

Dampness is not always a result of condensation. There are two types of damp;

- **Penetrating damp** occurs when water enters your home through external faults such as faulty roof or defective guttering.
- **Rising Damp** is due to a failure with the damp proofing or membrane of your home where the water gets into the home through walls and floors.

You can usually tell if there is rising damp in walls by a fairly regular horizontal tidemark up to a couple of meters above the floor. Below it, the wall is usually discoloured, darkening and there may be mould growth and loose wallpaper. In severe cases rotting skirting and powdery plaster may occur. This form of dampness usually has a direct cause and so can be easier to stop, for example, fixing any leaks to stop water entering from the outside.

Condensation however requires constant control, the best methods can be seen here.

Control, prevention and removal of condensation and dampness

Producing less moisture in your home will help prevent and reduce the effects of condensation and dampness. To control condensation, you can follow these simple steps;

Control Moisture

- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when in use to stop steam reaching cold surfaces in other rooms.
- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles
- Keep rooms well ventilated and always use an extractor fan where available
- Do not obstruct or seal air vents
- Allow air to circulate around the home by moving furniture away from cold external walls

Produce less moisture

- Cover pots and pans when cooking.
- Dry clothes outside instead of on radiators
- If you use a clothes dryer, make sure it is ventilated to the outside of your home.
- When filling a bath, fill with cold water first, then add hot water.

Keep your home warm

A constant warm temperature in the home will keep condensation to a minimum. To do this a few steps can be taken to insulate your home, making it warmer, reducing condensation and cutting your fuel bills.

- Ensuring you have good insulation in cavity walls, the roof and flooring, this will help reduce heat loss.
- Maintain a constant temperature when heating your home.

Removing Mould?

Mould growth is a sign of moisture presence and indicates that there is a problem with ventilation and heating.

- Kill and remove mould using a fungicidal wash.
- Do not brush or vacuum mould away
- Once the mould has been removed, redecorate with a fungicidal paint.
- Do not simply repaint or wallpaper over, as this will not kill the mould.

If you have any questions about what you have read in this booklet, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team on 0208 554 1009.