

Condensation, mould and damp

How to reduce the risk of condensation and mould growth

Important information about your home ventilation system

The ventilation system in your home has been designed to work together to help keep your home condensation, mould and damp free. If you use one of the features incorrectly, or not at all, there is a higher chance of condensation, damp and mould developing.

It's important that you keep the trickle vents on your windows open and your extractor fan running all the time. The running cost of your fan is extremely low – costing no more than a few pounds for the whole year.

The fan has a built-in moisture sensor that detects when increased moisture starts to build up and will automatically boost to a higher setting to reduce this build-up. The fan draws the air in through the window vents and circulates the around the house and out through the extractor fan. It's this circulation of air that prevents moisture staying in the air and reduces the risk of damp, mould and condensation.

The rest of this information sheet provides you with more useful information and tips about condensation, mould and damp and other things you can do to help prevent the build-up in your home.

What is condensation?

Condensation is moisture or small droplets of water in the air produced by everyday activities such as cooking, bathing and even breathing. When air containing moisture comes into contact with colder surfaces it can appear as droplets of water. It's most noticeable on windows in cold weather.

Condensation can also appear on or near wooden external doors, mirrors, in the corners of rooms, behind wardrobes, sofas and beds, and in cupboards where air does not circulate as quickly. It forms on cold surfaces and places where there is little or no movement of air.

Too much moisture in the air inside a property together with too little air circulation is the most common cause of black mould growth on walls and furniture, and mildew on clothes, curtains and other fabrics.

Tips to avoid condensation

- Follow the ventilation system instructions at the start of this sheet
- Move furniture away from the walls so that warm air can circulate
- Don't overfill wardrobes and cupboards; leave enough gaps between the walls to allow air to circulate
- Keep lids on cooking pans and use the minimum amount of water for cooking
- Hang washing outside to dry, or in the bathroom with the door closed and a window open, or an extractor fan on. Don't be tempted to put any washing on radiators



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- Make sure tumble dryers are vented to the outside
- Don't use paraffin or bottled gas heaters
- Put cold water in the bath before the hot water to reduce steam
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms
- Open the kitchen and bathroom windows when cooking or washing, so that steam can escape. Use the extractor fan, if you have one
- Don't cover over any air vents – they help moisture escape and ventilate your home
- Make sure the ventilation slots at the top of your windows are clear and working
- In colder weather, keep your home at an all-round constant temperature, try to leave the heating on a lower setting for a longer period of time.

Treating mould yourself

If you find that you have mould, don't try and remove it by brushing or using a vacuum cleaner, instead:

- Wipe down affected areas daily – don't use bleach or washing up liquid
- Apply a fungicidal wash available from most supermarkets and DIY stores, but make sure you follow the instructions. Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo any affected carpets
- If you need to redecorate, use a good-quality fungicidal paint and a fungal resistant wallpaper paste to help stop the mould coming back. Remember that the effect of fungicidal or anti-condensation paint will be destroyed
- if you use with ordinary paint or wallpaper paste.

Did you know how much condensation is produced if you...

- **Cook?** Cooking, washing, bathing and ironing can add to condensation.
- **Sit at home?** Two people at home for 16 hours will produce three pints of condensation.
- **Wash?** A bath or a shower will produce two pints every time it is run.
- **Do dry washing?** Drying clothes indoors will produce nine pints.
- **Make a cup of tea?** Using a kettle will produce six pints a day.
- **Do the washing up?** Washing dishes will produce two pints in a day.

Daily ventilation

As well as using your ventilation system correctly as explained above, for 30 minutes every day, you should:

- Open a window to the first notch at either side or each end of your house
- At the same time, open any interior doors.

Remember to keep your home safe – don't leave windows open when you go out.

If you've taken all the recommended steps to get rid of condensation and you still have a problem, please call us on **0115 915 2222**.