

Condensation

Fact Sheet for Tenants



Condensation

Condensation is caused when moisture held in the warmer air meets a cold surface like a window or wall and condenses into water droplets. If this happens regularly, mould may start to grow. This usually appears on cold outside walls and surfaces and in places where the air does not circulate well. The moisture created can damage clothes, furnishings and decoration. It leaves a musty smell.

What causes condensation?

Condensation usually occurs in winter, because the building is cold and because windows are opened less so the moist air cannot escape.

You can often see condensation for short periods in bathrooms and kitchens because of the steamy atmosphere. Quite frequently it appears for long periods in unheated bedrooms. Sometimes it is in cupboards or corners of rooms where ventilation and movement of air are restricted.

When condensation occurs

All houses are affected by condensation at some time. It usually occurs when a lot of moisture and steam are produced.

For example

- When cooking
- Having a bath or shower
- Washing clothes
- After a cold night when windows mist up

The main causes of condensation are

- Using portable paraffin and gas heaters as they release water vapour into the atmosphere
- Drying clothes inside the property
- Steam from cooking in the kitchen
- Steam from bathing and washing
- Lack of air circulating in the property
- No ventilation in the property
- Raising room temperatures suddenly

This can put warm air in contact with cold surfaces, increasing the chances of water vapour condensing.

How to cut down condensation within your home

- Do not use portable gas/ paraffin heaters in your home.

- Try not to dry clothes in your home. If this is not practical, keep the door of the room where the clothes are drying closed. Open the windows. This will prevent the moist air circulating in the property.
- When cooking, the kitchen should be ventilated. Use the extractor fan, if you have one, or open a window. Keep the kitchen doors closed to prevent moist air circulating in the property.
- When washing/bathing, keep the bathroom door closed. Turn on the extractor fan, if you have one, or open the window to disperse the moist air.
- Keep furniture clear of the room walls to let air circulate.
- Keep the property warm as moisture does not condense in warm air.

How to get rid of condensation

Following this advice will tackle condensation problems. You may even remove condensation altogether.

If condensation occurs, wipe up any moisture with a dry cloth. If you feel there is a large problem with mould growth, there are various ways to remove it, but first of all contact us for advice or an inspection.

What is the difference between damp and condensation?

Damp occurs when a fault in the building's basic structure lets in water from outside. There are basically two types of damp:

- Penetrating damp
- Rising damp

Penetrating damp occurs if water is coming in through the walls or roof, (for example, under a roof tile) or through cracks.

Rising damp occurs if there is a problem with the damp proof course. There is a barrier built into floors and walls to stop the moisture rising through the house from the ground.

The usual evidence of rising damp is a "tide mark" on the walls that shows how high it has risen. There can also be a musty smell.

If you feel that your home is suffering from either rising or penetrating damp, and after trying all of the above methods, please contact us for further advice.