



Condensation Advice

What is Condensation

There is always some water vapour in the air, which you cannot see. Condensation is caused when moisture held in the air meets a cold surface like a window or wall and condenses into water droplets. Condensation gets worse when the house is colder, whether it is raining or dry and it does not leave a 'tide mark,' unlike other causes of damp. It often results in black mould growth on walls and other surfaces or you can see actual water droplets. It is usually worse in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards and on North facing walls.

How do I Know if it's Damp or Condensation

Condensation is different to penetrating damp, which is caused by water getting into the house from outside, usually through windows, doors or roofs. Dampness of this nature is often easier to deal with than condensation as repairing the defect in the roof, doors or window can cure it. Rising damp occurs if there is a problem with the damp proof course (the barrier built in floors and walls to stop moisture rising through the house from the ground). The usual evidence for this is a 'tidemark' on the walls. There can also be a musty smell.

Why do I need to worry about condensation and damp?

Living in a damp house isn't healthy and can particularly affect people with rheumatism, bone disorders and breathing problems. The dusty substance which you see as mould, is in fact millions of tiny spores. These commonly irritate asthma sufferers and cause allergic reactions with symptoms similar to hay fever.

How do I solve the problem?

There are three main steps that will help you reduce condensation in your home. All three steps will probably need to be taken, though steps one two and three are the most important and can be done at little cost.



What to do if you find evidence of condensation

If there are black marks or mould growth then wash down the surface with a mixture of five parts water to one part bleach and dry off with a cloth. This should be repeated as necessary. You can also use an anti-fungal product (Detol mould & Mildew Remover) and follow the manufacturer's instructions. Cleaning the mould is the responsibility of the tenant/Support staff and not the landlord.

1. Ventilate your home - let the wet air out

You can do this without creating a draught - keep a small window or vent open when there is moisture in the room. More ventilation is required in 'wet' rooms like the kitchen and bathroom areas. When in use open the windows wide and close the doors to prevent the moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms which are often colder and more likely to get condensation. Use extraction fans where fitted, for at least 20 minutes after having a bath or a shower - long enough to dry out the room.

Try to open your windows at least once a day, but remember to be secure and shut them when you go out.

Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid overfilling as this stops the air circulating. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.

2. Produce less moisture

Some ordinarily daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

When cooking, cover pans and turn down to simmer. Do not leave kettles boiling

Dry washing outdoors on a line if possible, or put it into the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or the fan on. If using a tumble dryer, make sure you vent it outside (unless it is a self-condensing type) Avoid drying washing on a radiator or in front of a radiant heater.



3. Heat your home a little

In cold weather, the best way to avoid condensation is by keeping background heating on all day, even when no one is at home.

If you don't have heating in every room then open doors to these rooms and let some heat in and allow the air to circulate. It is advisable to heat rooms to at least 10°C even when not occupied.