



OTHA  
Tenant  
Information  
Leaflet

## Condensation and Mould Growth Advice

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It is important to note that there are different types of dampness, and each have different solutions. The types of dampness you might find in your home are:

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### **Condensation**

Condensation is water vapour held in the air. The problem occurs where lots of moisture is being produced, for example in the kitchen and bathroom, which settles on cold surfaces and may result in mould. There is a misconception that condensation only occurs in older properties. This is not true and can happen in new properties as well. This leaflet gives you advice on how to tackle this problem.

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### **Rising Damp**

Rising Damp is caused by moisture rising up the wall from the ground below. This only occurs on ground floor walls and can usually be identified by a tidemark up to 1 metre above the ground. The usual remedy is to install or repair the damp proof course.

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### **Rain Penetration**

This is caused by an outside defect in the wall or roof, which allows moisture to come through. You will notice this type of damp is worse in wet weather. You should contact our **Maintenance Team on Tel: 01475 807001 to report signs of rain penetration.**

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### **Plumbing Problems**

A small leak over a period of time will lead to a patch of dampness close to the source of the leak. Fixing the leak should solve the problem. **You should contact our Maintenance Team on Tel: 01475 807001 to report any plumbing problems.**

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### **Condensation**

If your home is damp or you find patches of mould on walls, furnishings or clothes, condensation may be the cause. The following Advice will help you solve the problem.

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### **Why are you getting Condensation?**

Air can only hold a certain amount of water vapour – the warmer it is the more it can hold. If it is cooled by contact with a cold surface such as a mirror, window or even a wall, the water vapour will turn into droplets of water-condensation. So the warmer you keep your home the less likely you are to get condensation.

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### **When is it a problem?**

Every home gets condensation at some time- usually when lots of moisture and steam are being produced, for instance at bath times, when a main meal is being cooked or when clothes are being washed.

It is quite normal to find your bedroom windows misted up in the morning after a cold night. There is nothing much you can do to stop this. But if your home never feels free of condensation read on.....

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### **How do you know it is Condensation?**

It is not always easy to tell but other kinds of damp, such as rain or plumbing leaks usually leave a tide mark. Condensation is usually found on north facing walls and in corners, in cupboards and under work surfaces – in fact wherever there is little air movement.

If you are not sure what is causing the damp in your home, start by checking pipes, overflows and under sinks to see if there are any obvious leaks. Have a look outside too – you may be able to see if there are slates missing from the roof or cracked/ leaking gutters or rainwater pipes.

If you live in a new or recently modernised house or flat, don't forget that it may not have dried out yet from the water remaining after the building work. It usually takes 9 to 18 months for this to happen and you need to use more heat during that time.

### ***What can you do about it!***

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The way you use your home affects the amount of condensation you get.

This does not mean that you should alter your habits drastically – just bear in mind the following tips:

### ***Heating***

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You will get less condensation if you keep your house warm most of the time. Insulation will help you do this. With fuel the price it is, try to remember the following too:

- It is important that your heating system is checked regularly so that it works efficiently.
- Try to leave some background heat on through the day in cold weather. Most dwellings take quite a long time to warm up, and it may cost you more if you try to heat it up quickly in the evenings.
- If you can't afford to spend more on fuel due to high quarterly bills, ask your fuel supplier about their budget schemes, which help spread the cost of fuel.

### ***Ventilation***

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The more moisture produced in your home, the greater are the chances of condensation, unless there is adequate ventilation. Nobody likes draughts, but some ventilation is essential.

### ***Windows***

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In winter open windows a little, only as long as they are misted up. If you fit draught stripping, leave a space for a small amount of air to get through.

### ***Chimneys***

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Never block these up completely. If you are blocking up a fireplace, fit an air vent to allow ventilation.

### ***Bottled gas and paraffin heaters***

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You will need to allow extra ventilation if you use one. Flueless heaters of this sort produce more than a pint of water for every pint of fuel they burn.

### ***Drying Clothes***

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Drying clothes indoors, particularly on radiators, can increase condensation unless you open a window to allow air to circulate. If you have a tumble dryer which is not vented to the outside you will need to allow more ventilation when you use it.

### ***Doors***

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Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut, particularly when cooking, washing or bathing – otherwise water vapour will spread right through the house. And condensation will probably reach other rooms.

### ***Extractor Fans***

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If you have an extractor fan use it when the windows get steamed up.

### ***Kettles and Pans***

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Don't allow kettles and pans to boil away any longer than necessary.

### ***Cupboards and Wardrobes***

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Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes, Always make sure that some air can circulate freely by fitting ventilators in doors and leaving a space at the back of the shelves.

### ***Dehumidifiers***

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A dehumidifier can be expensive to run and will not solve the problem if the damp is caused by condensation. You will not reduce condensation dampness unless you take steps to balance the level of moisture, heat and ventilation in your home.

### ***First steps against mould***

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- Treat any mould you may already have in your home then do what you can to reduce condensation. This will restrict new mould growth.
- Do not disturb mould by brushing or vacuuming, this can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- Wipe off mould growth immediately with water. Do not use washing up liquid.
- To kill and remove mould growth, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash or spray. This is available from hardware, DIY stores and supermarkets. Choose a product which carries a Health & Safety Executive "approval number". Always follow the instructions carefully. **Do not use bleach.**
- Dry – Clean clothes affected by mildew and shampoo carpets.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good fungicidal paint to help prevent mould