

CONDENSATION & MOULD

AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE FOR TENANTS

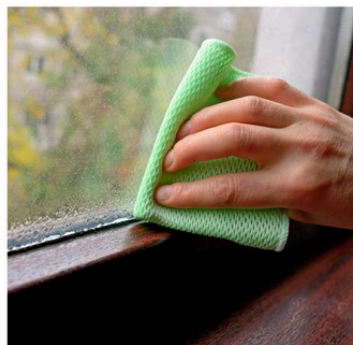


Tenants, letting agents and landlords all need to contribute to preventative measures, to reduce the impact of condensation and mould on both living conditions and properties. Taking reasonable steps to tackle condensation and mould is not only about looking after your health, but also your responsibility as a tenant.

For this reason, we have put together a guide, as well as some background information to help understand the causes of condensation and how to combat them.

If you are having issues with condensation or mould caused by condensation, you will need to take proper steps to deal with it. I would thoroughly recommend reading all of the information provided in this guide. In meantime, there are some simple things you should do straight away.

- **Wipe off any standing water from surfaces and windows.** – Wring out the cloth used in the sink, don't just leave to dry or the moisture will stay into the room.
- **Heat the entire property,** don't leave some rooms cold. Make sure rooms reach at least 18-20°C (degrees Celsius) at a time. Don't leave the property without heating in cold weather.
- **Make sure windows and vents are opened** – the property must be heated in cold weather for this to allow moisture to escape the property.
- **Clean any condensation mould off** with a specific anti-mould product or light bleach solution, such as HG Mould Spray or similar.
- **Make sure there is space behind furniture** for air to flow around it.
- **Don't dry things on radiators**



What is Condensation?

Condensation is water droplets created by warm air hitting a cold surface. This causes surface dampness which if left unattended, leads to mould growth. This is an issue affecting homes in the UK and is commonly caused by cold internal room temperatures due to insufficient heating and a lack of adequate ventilation. If houses are colder than usual, for example because heating is not switched on, this can increase condensation.

It is also more common in places where there is a lack of air flow, such as behind furniture that has been pushed up against a wall. This is because there is not enough air flow to move the humid air around and away, so it sits on the surface and condenses, leaving water droplets behind.

Look for condensation in your home. It can appear on or near windows, in corners and in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. Condensation forms on cold surfaces and places where there is little movement of air.



Condensation problems

If condensation is not addressed, this can lead to problems such as mould. Condensation mould is a fungus that grows on wet surfaces, routinely caused by excess moisture resulting from condensation when walls, windows and surfaces are cold and there is high moisture content in the air.

Dampness caused by excessive condensation can also lead to mould growth on furniture, mildew on clothes and other fabrics and the rotting of wooden window frames. Damp/humid conditions can also provide an environment in which house dust mites can more easily multiply, or attract other pests, such as woodlice.

If you are noticing issues with any of the above, please let us know straight away.

You can email us at: info@bathpropshop.co.uk or call our office on 01225 464400 (if we manage your property).



Causes of condensation:

- Too much moisture produced in the home
- Lack of ventilation, so the moisture can't escape the property
- Insufficient temperature control ie. too cold inside the property
- Cold surfaces, where moist air will hit and condense

All of these factors need to be considered when tackling a condensation problem.

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even our breathing adds some moisture (remember breathing out on a cold day, or on to cold windows and mirrors to fog them up?).

One person asleep adds half a pint of water to the air overnight and over twice that rate when active during the day.

To give you some idea as to how much extra water this could be in a day, here are a few illustrations (right hand side)

Total moisture added in one day
= **24 pints (or 11.4 litres)**

**24 Pints
every day!**

That's a lot of moisture created from simply living in a property!

Historically this moisture would have naturally escaped, however measures such as double glazing and insulation now trap that moisture inside the house. External windows and trickle vents need to be opened regularly to allow fresh air to circulate.

Without opening windows moisture builds up and creates mould on cold surfaces like walls.

Two people simply being at home can produce...



A shower can produce...



Drying clothes indoors can produce...



Washing dishes produces...



Cooking and using a kettle...



Who is responsible?

While homeowners have clear responsibility for dealing with condensation and mould, in a tenanted property, the responsibility is shared between landlords, managing agents and tenants.

How is responsibility split?

Tenant's responsibilities:

- Using an appropriate cleaning product at regular intervals
- Putting lids on pans and using an extractor fan when cooking or showering
- Not hanging wet clothes on radiators or drying clothes indoors at all, if possible
- Running a reasonable amount of heating in the house
- Keeping vents on UPVC windows open
- Ensuring that furniture is not preventing air flow by being placed against walls or in front of radiators

What can agents and landlords do?

- Decorate properties using anti-mould paint, if suitable
- Inspect the condition of the property in response to any concerns raised by the tenant
- Ensure vents and fans are working
- Ensure tenants know how to use the heating system and thermostat controls efficiently
- Repair any leaks or plumbing issues promptly
- Provide guidance to tenants

Reducing Condensation in your home

Damp and mould in domestic properties can lead to health issues and exacerbate existing allergies and respiratory conditions. There are simple steps that tenants can take to prevent condensation and mould. Everyone should understand how daily routines can contribute to damp and mould around the house and how to prevent issues arising.

Reduce moisture produced in the home by:

- Hanging your washing outside to dry if at all possible. If not, hang it in a room that is properly ventilated and heated, so the warm air can escape the property and take the moisture away with it. Don't be tempted to put it on radiators or in front of a floor heater, as this will just disperse the water into the whole room and cause damage. It can also damage the radiator.
- Always cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water needed for cooking vegetables.
- When filling your bath, run the cold water first then add the hot - it will reduce the steam by 90% which leads to condensation.
- If you use a tumble drier, make sure it is properly vented to the outside or that it is condensing type.
- Using a dehumidifier can reduce moisture levels
- If you see evidence of leaks from plumbing or from a damaged roof, chimney or guttering which is causing water supply to penetrate the property or repeatedly flow against walls, contact The Bath Property Shop. Repairs should be dealt with promptly to prevent more complex damage occurring. While waiting for the repair, limit any internal impact by drying surfaces and collecting leaks in a bucket or other container.



Increase levels of ventilation by:

- Open windows whenever possible and ensure any vents are open to allow air to circulate around your home and vent to the outside. In the winter or cold weather, the property must be heated for this to work, as warm air will naturally vent to cold air (high pressure goes to low pressure).
- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom for about 20 minutes after use by opening a window or keeping the extractor fan on. Always notify us if your extractor fan is not working.
- Ventilate your kitchen when cooking, washing up or washing by hand. A window slightly open is as good as one fully open, as long as the room is warm. If you have one, use your cooker extractor hood or extractor fan whenever using the hob.
- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night, or make sure trickle vents are open if fitted. (But remember your security).
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of the house if you are having issues in other rooms.
- To reduce the risk of mildew on clothes and other stored items, allow air to circulate round them. Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls, and where possible place wardrobes and furniture against internal walls. Very full cupboards also prevent air from circulating, contributing to damp conditions.

Temperature control:

The World Health Organisation Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality: Dampness and Mould, recommends keeping rooms between 18-20°C (degrees Celsius). Having heating regularly on, even at a low temperature, helps to prevent damp and mould.

Warm air holds more moisture than cooler air; which is more likely to deposit droplets of condensation round your home. Air is like a sponge; the warmer it is, the more moisture it will hold. Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the unheated rooms. That means that it is better to have a medium-to-low level of heat throughout the entire property.

Every property is different, and some will require more heating than others, to ensure no issues arise from condensation.

Cold surfaces:

Condensation forms more easily on cold surfaces in the home, for example external walls, windows and ceilings.

- It is important to note that any condensation or surface dampness that collects on windows or walls, should be wiped with a clean cloth or towel daily. This will minimise the subsequent appearance of any black mould.
- Wring out the cloth used in the sink and don't just leave to dry, or the water will go back into the room.
- Use moisture catchers near/on these problem areas, such as window sills.

In many cases, these surfaces can be made warmer by adequately heating a property.

Reducing Condensation in your home

It is very common for mould spots to appear in houses around windows and in bathrooms and kitchens where increased water is circulating and gathering during washing and cooking.

If you find condensation mould; it appears as a black cloud of dots on surfaces such as walls and windowsills; clean it off straight away. If mould is allowed to stay, it will continue to grow and spread. This can cause damage to a property, but also isn't good for people's health.

Any signs of condensation mould must be wiped down using a light bleach solution or mould and mildew cleaning product to ensure the mould is killed off. Products such as HG Mould Spray or other specialised anti-mould cleaning products work very well. These cleaning products are widely available from supermarkets and household retailers.

These products ensure the mould is properly cleaned off. Please avoid any home remedies, such as vinegar or similar, as these do not always kill the mould off, giving it further chance to spread.

Wear a face mask to prevent the inhalation of spores, take care to ventilate the room and protect your skin and follow manufacturers' instructions for any commercial cleaning products. Hopefully the guide above has been of some help.

Please put this information into practice, to better assist you in looking after your home.

As always, we are here to help, so please feel free to contact us.

Additional Support for cost of living challenges:

If you are struggling with energy costs you can find advice and support at:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/getting-help-if-you-cant-afford-your-energy-bills>

There is a Priority Services Register to provide extra help to those in vulnerable situations:

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/get-help-your-supplier-priority-services-register>