



A Tenants Guide to Dealing with Condensation

What is Condensation?

There is always some water in the air, even if you can't see it. If the air gets colder, or warm moist air contacts cold surfaces, the air releases its moisture and tiny droplets of water appear. This is condensation.

When does condensation occur

Condensation can appear in houses on colder wall and window surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air, such as behind beds, kitchen cupboards and the corners of rooms. It usually occurs when a lot of moisture that can't escape has produced.

For example:-

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



Why is condensation a problem?

The water formed by condensation can be a problem to your home and your health. Moisture encourages rot in wooden objects like doors and window frames and spoils decorations and furnishings. It can provide the ideal conditions for mould growth and mildew which causes black patches on walls and fabric. Severe mould growth can make asthma and other respiratory illnesses worse due to the inhalation of mould spores.

How to avoid condensation

Condensation and its associated problems can be reduced as much as possible by following the following guidelines:

Check the condition of the property

Regular checking and planned repairs are the best approach before the defects cause a serious problem.

- Rising damp – is caused by water from the ground getting into the walls and floors often due to the failure of the damp proof course or membrane.
- Penetrating damp – check for the following problems:
a leak in the roof or gutter, rain water pipes or even the mains water supply; missing roof tiles; damaged flat roof coverings; cracking to brickwork; rotten windowsills; blocked guttering; blocked or missing air bricks; crumbling brickwork or rendering to chimneystacks.

Produce less moisture

- Reduce the steam by covering pans and not leaving kettles boiling
- When possible, do not dry washing indoors.
- Vent tumble dryers using proper vent kits or use a self-condensing type

Ventilate to remove moisture

When you are doing something that puts moisture into the air, think about ventilation. In most cases, you can get rid of damp air by simply opening the windows

- Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room
- Cook with the door closed and the window open to help prevent moist air circulating through the house. If you have one use the extractor fan or hob extract system.
- In the bathroom, always keep the door shut during use and switch on the extractor fan if available. After use, keep the door shut and open the window to let the steam out.
- If you replace your window units at any time, make sure that the new frames incorporate trickle ventilators. Make sure that all air bricks and double glazing trickle vents are clear and open
- Dry clothes outside if possible. If drying inside, use a space that can be confined and ventilated. Tumble dryers should be vented to the outside.
- If you are blocking up a fireplace, fit an air vent to the flue of the chimney.
- Fit extractor fans to the bathroom and kitchen



How to avoid condensation continued...

Keep your house warm

Remember when the house is warmer condensation is less likely to occur

- If your home has cavity walls, consider installing cavity wall insulation.
- You can discourage condensation on the walls by insulating them effectively with insulating plasterboard and rolls.
- Heat the whole house rather than just one or two rooms and keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no-one at home.

First steps against mould

First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear.

- Wipe down windows and window-sills every morning in cold weather.
- You can use a mild bleach solution to remove light mould staining on hard surfaces.
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and windows frames with a fungicidal wash. Follow the manufactures instructions precisely.
- Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets
- Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Please note this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints and wallpaper.

The best way of avoiding severe mould growth is to minimise the source of the dampness, and properly heat and ventilate your home.

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