

Damp, Mould and Condensation Info

A Guide for Tenants

What is Mould?

It is a common misconception that damp and mould are the same thing. It is true that mould can grow from damp, but the damp is usually not caused by a property defect but actually a condensation issue.

Fans of smelly blue cheese might not view mould as a problem, but in a home, it is both unsightly and a potential health hazard. Unfortunately, mould infestations are common, especially in damp areas of the home such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Mould spores are found in most indoor environments, but it isn't until the spores find a home and begin to grow that they cause a problem. Mould is a fungus, when it breeds, it sends new spores floating through the air. This allows it to spread and start new mould colonies elsewhere.

Preventing Mould

- Wipe down the inside of windows if they become wet with condensation
- Try not to place beds and wardrobes against outside walls as mould is more likely to grow behind furniture
- Don't put too many things in wardrobes and cupboards as it stops the air circulating
- Report defects to extractor fans and heating systems to us promptly

Damp

Dampness, makes houses difficult to keep warm. Wet building materials lose heat more quickly than dry ones and also some of the heat input is being used to dry out the house.

Signs of damp aren't limited to the appearance of mould. Damp is occasionally the result of a property or building issue and may require an action from us. The most common causes of damp are:

- Leaking roofs or gutters
- Leaking pipework
- Rising damp (water from the ground soaking its way up through the brickwork)
- Deteriorating pointing, brickwork or render



Where are you most likely to find condensation?

Condensation often appears in the coldest part of the room or where there is little air circulation, and therefore more moisture in the air, such as in corners, on or near windows, or around cupboards and wardrobes.

- Cold corners of rooms
- Wardrobes
- Cupboards, particularly built-in cupboards
- Behind furniture against an outside wall
- Cold surfaces such as mirrors, single-glazed windows and metal-framed windows
- Kitchens and bathrooms (where moist air is produced through washing, cooking, etc)
- Walls of unheated rooms

Remember - we will ensure your property has the facility for adequate heating and ventilation but you, the tenant, are responsible for keeping condensation under control.

Why does water appear on windows/cupboards/walls?

If the surface is cold enough and if there is enough water vapour in the air then it will condense. Warm moisture will seek out the coldest spots in a room, appearing as condensation. Mould caused by condensation often appears as black spots.

Where does this water come from?

We all produce water by drying our clothes indoors, showering, cooking, boiling the kettle and even rain produces excess moisture. It is just an on-going process that never stops.

Can you have mould without condensation?

Too much moisture leads to mould. However, mould occurs around 68% humidity, condensation occurs at 100% so you can have mould but still have clear windows or walls. Condensation is not always obvious. A wall or floor may not visibly have droplets of water, but may feel damp to the touch.

Does your property feel damp?

If Yes, this is most likely caused by condensation and NOT a problem with the damp proof course or by water getting into the property. In all, the average household can produce up to 20 litres of water per day, just by their normal day to day activities. There is always some moisture



in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder, it cannot hold all of the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. Anywhere where this warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface is called condensation. This process can occur anywhere in the home.

Condensation is caused by:

- Too much moisture in the air
- Too little heat
- Too little ventilation
- Too much condensation leads to mould

Reducing moisture

- When cooking, cover pans with lids and keep the kitchen door closed
- Make sure a window is open or the extractor fan is on when showering
- If you have to dry clothes indoors, put them in a room with the door closed and the window open or a fan on
- If running a bath put cold water in first then hot – this will cut down on steam

Ventilation

The most important thing to prevent condensation forming on walls and windows is to prevent water from getting into the air in the first place. After this, the next best thing is to make sure any water in the air can quickly escape from your home.

Too much ventilation (draughts) can make condensation worse by making homes harder to heat (causing cold surfaces on which condensation forms). But if you seal off all the draughts, then the moist air cannot escape from your home.

Helpful Tips

It is important to allow plenty of fresh air into your home as otherwise the indoor air will become stale and humid, leading to unhealthy conditions. Always keep a small window ajar or a vent open when someone is in the room.

Do not switch off or tamper with any ventilation equipment provided in your home

Extractor fans are used to quickly remove damp air from the kitchen and bathroom where the most moisture is produced, please use them.

Fans should be used whenever you are cooking or showering, when finished leave the fan on for about 20 minutes to ensure that all damp air is cleared.



An extractor fan will only work if the windows in the room are kept closed. If a window is open the fan will draw air in from outside, rather than drawing out the damp air from the room

Some fans switch on and off automatically according to the amount of moisture in the air. Do not turn these off at the power switch as they are designed to work when they are needed. If you suspect that they are coming on more or less often than they should, then you need to report this to us.

Your windows may not be the coldest spot in the room (especially if they are double glazed). Condensation may therefore appear on walls, floors and ceilings, even if your windows are not steamed up.

Heating your home

It is best to tackle condensation first by reducing moisture in the air, and helping water in the air to escape from your home. However, you can also help prevent condensation by heating your home better.

- Heat all rooms even if they are not being used
- Do not place furniture or belongings in front of radiators as this will stop them heating the room efficiently
- Do not use the heating on a high setting for short periods of time.
- Heating your home for a longer time at a lower temperature will keep your home warmer and cost you less
- If you have central heating use the thermostat to control the heating by setting the temperature to a comfortable level. The recommended temperature is 18°C in the hall and 21 °c in your living room
- If your radiators have thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs), these will give you greater control over the heat from each individual radiator, ensure all radiators or on in all rooms

