

UPDATE

# How to reduce condensation in your home

## If problems still persist:

Should you experience ongoing problems with humidity in the home, it may be worth considering the following:

- Cover cold surfaces, such as cold water pipes, with insulation.
- Increase the use of extractor fans where provided in the kitchen and bathroom after bathing and cooking.
- Always report any leaks and other building faults to the Repairs line on **0161 770 8821** or to your Court Manager.
- Ensure rooms and walls do not become cold by leaving windows open for too long especially in cold weather. Ideally leave a small gap between the sash and the frame of about a quarter of an inch or at any time you see condensation forming on the windows, should provide sufficient ventilation.

## Home Sweet Home

We hope that you will not experience any of the above symptoms in your home. Should you have any concerns about condensation or need further advice please speak to your Court Manager or phone the Housing 21 Repairs Line on **0161 770 8821**. We will then arrange an inspection for you.

## Summary

REMEMBER the key points in helping to maintain a condensation free home are:

- Produce less moisture
- Ventilate your home well
- Maintain temperature levels

And if the problems persists, report your Concerns directly to your Court Manager or to the Repairs Line on **0161 770 8821**

## You can contact us at:

### Housing 21

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## Condensation advice.

We all produce condensation as part of our normal daily lives. It occurs mainly during cold weather, regardless of whether it is raining or dry. It can produce mould growth and appears in places where there is little movement of air, such as on window sills, in corners or behind wardrobes and cupboards.

This leaflet has been produced to help you reduce condensation in your home and advise you what to do if your home is still affected by condensation after taking some simple measures.

## What is condensation?

Condensation is the most common form of dampness in buildings and occurs when water vapour in the air condenses on a cold surface. There is always some moisture in the air even if you cannot see it.

Three factors contribute to the condensation of water on surfaces around the home:

1. High humidity of indoor air.
2. Low temperature of the walls and surfaces.
3. Poor ventilation.

**High humidity** - Condensation appears when the indoor air in a room cannot hold the level of moisture. Warm air can hold more moisture than cold air. For example, running a bath causes steam. As the air in the bathroom fills up with water vapour it can no longer hold all the moisture that it contains. As a result, tiny drops of water appear and develop first on cold surfaces such as walls, toilet cisterns and window sills.

**Low temperature** - Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather. The humid air comes into contact with cold indoor surfaces, forms a surface mist which turns into water vapour that runs down the walls and can sometimes cause wallpaper to blister. Condensation often forms on colder north facing walls and in corners of rooms.

**Poor ventilation** – Humidity of indoor air can be reduced by ventilation. If air exchange is insufficient, then humidity builds up and leads to increased condensation. In addition, walls remain cool when a lack of free movement of indoor air prevents warm air from reaching them. Mould may therefore form on surfaces, particularly in places where there is little movement of air.

## Signs of condensation around the home

The water in the air which causes surface condensation is basically produced by general every day living activities such as cooking, boiling kettles, bathing, showering and drying clothes as well as simply breathing. Typically, an average couple produces around 10 pints of moisture every day.

These normal every day activities release large volumes of moisture into the atmosphere and when coupled with a lack of ventilation can cause walls, floors, roof spaces, windows and clothing etc. to become damp as the warm moist air meets the colder surfaces and condenses on surfaces and other items in and around the home.

Other activities such as drying clothes over radiators will significantly increase the levels of water vapour in the atmosphere.

The most common mould associated with condensation is known as the 'black spot' mould, although some green and yellow moulds may also be present.

These moulds are also characterised by a musty smell and may cause some spoiling of internal decorations and fabrics.

Once they have taken a hold, moulds thrive on a constant supply of warm moist air and therefore tend to develop where air flow is limited and the air remains damp and stagnant, for example corners of windows, doors, floors, etc.

In extreme cases, 'triangular' patterns of moulds very typical of a condensation problem appear.



## How to treat condensation

If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear. If your home is showing signs of mould growth, please contact the Housing 21 Repairs line directly - telephone **0161 770 8821** or inform your Court Manager who will report the problem for you.

The maintenance contractor will treat the affected area with a fungicidal wash after which it can be decorated if required. Clothes containing mildew can be dry cleaned.

## How can I reduce condensation in my home?

### Produce less moisture by:

- Covering pans when you are cooking
- Dry clothes outdoors or in the communal laundry if your court has one, or you live in a bungalow nearby.
- Vent your tumble dryer to the outside of your home.
- Never use of paraffin or flueless bottled gas heaters.

### Ventilate to remove moisture

- Ventilate your home all the time, by opening windows (for up to one hour after cooking or bathing), trickle vents and using the extractor fans where provided.
- Increase the ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom by opening the windows when in use and shutting the door to these rooms to stop moist air from getting into the other rooms.
- Ventilate cupboards, wardrobes and make sure the vents provided are not blocked up or taped over.
- Allow adequate air circulation around large pieces of furniture such as wardrobes and cupboards.

### Maintain temperature levels:

- In cold weather, one of the best ways to keep rooms warm enough to avoid condensation is to keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home.
- Set your central heating to provide background warmth in all rooms including unused rooms. For advice on how to do this, please speak to your Court Manager.
- Use the thermostatically-controlled radiator valves where these have been installed to control the heating room by room.
- The thermostats will help control heating and costs. Remember to provide background ventilation at the same time (by opening window trickle vents and windows and using extractor fans where fitted).
- Dehumidifiers will help dry out high levels of moisture in newly built properties. They can also help reduce condensation but are of limited use in cold damp rooms.