



Working Together



What is Condensation?

Moisture is produced in all homes by breathing, cooking and washing. An average household produces 21 pints of water vapour each day.

However, there is a limit to the amount of water vapour that air can contain – the warmer it is the more it can hold. When the warm air comes into contact with a cold surface such as a window, or when too much vapour is put into the air, the moisture turns to liquid and forms as droplets of water – this is known as condensation.

Condensation frequently happens in warm, wet rooms like kitchens and bathrooms. Condensation is seen on windows as 'steaming up' and as patches of dampness on walls and ceilings.

Why is it a problem?

Small amounts of condensation can be found in most homes but if it is not dealt with, mould growth can occur. Try to achieve a balance between heat, moisture and ventilation.

What can you do?

If you think you have condensation in your home there are a number of practical steps you can take.

Kitchen

- Keep lids on pans
- Ventilation – open windows slightly
- If you have a tumble dryer, ventilate it outside and try not to use it when you cook
- Keep the internal kitchen door closed when cooking
- Do not let kettles and pans boil longer than necessary
- If you have an extractor fan fitted make sure you use it when cooking

Bathroom

- Heat the room before taking a bath or shower
- Open a window afterwards
- Add an inch of cold water to the bath before adding the hot



A bathroom affected by condensation and mould

The effects of condensation

Black mould growth is the most common effect of condensation, but mould can appear in many other colours on carpets, clothing and wood.

This picture shows the effects of condensation and mould developing in the corner of a room. The corners of the room are generally affected more as the air does not circulate so well. Note the way that the black mould climbs and concentrates on the coldest part of the wall – an outside corner



Mould

Every dwelling, irrespective of its construction, contains within its fabric mould spores which are inactive and completely harmless.

However, given the right conditions these spores will germinate resulting in widespread growth of disfiguring black mould.

Mould needs very little nutrient to form and will grow on untreated walls and ceilings regardless of the decorative finish. Mould spores will also be released into the air and can give off a nasty, musty smell. Clothes, furnishings and carpets, (particularly natural materials such as leather) can also be ruined by unsightly mould.

Mould is a microscopic fungi, a group of organisms which also includes mushrooms and yeasts. Fungi are highly adapted to grow and reproduce rapidly, producing spores and mycelia in the process. In the home mould may be a risk to you and your family's health.

Mould releases toxins and spores which can be found in the millions depending on the amount of mould growing within the area.

Generally Tip for preventing condensation and mould

- Raising the room temperature also helps condensation, so try and keep your home as warm as you can
- It is best to have heating on for longer periods of time at a lower temperature. Try adjusting your central heating thermostat if you have one. Ask advice about getting the most from your heating system
- Insulate – use draft excluders where possible
- If condensation does form on the windows, wipe it off
- If you dry clothes indoors open a window to allow air to circulate
- Do not drip-dry clothes indoors if possible
- Try not to dry clothes on or in front of radiators
- Do not block air vents
- If mould does occur, it can be cleaned off walls, floors etc using a solution of one part bleach to 4 parts water