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PROPERTY SALES & LETTINGS

guide to tackling  
**condensation and mould**

# ways to reduce **condensation and mould**

## what is **condensation**?

Air contains amounts of *'invisible'* water - the higher the temperature of the air, the more water it can hold. Condensation occurs when air carrying water comes into contact with a cool surface, e.g. windows.

Every home gets condensation at some point. Condensation manifests itself as small water droplets / mist / beading water on window surfaces. This observation is quite normal after a cold night and is not indicative of a serious condensation problem.

## where does **dampness and condensation occur**?

The most vulnerable areas will be in rooms that produce excess moisture i.e. bathrooms and kitchens. Cold rooms or cold surfaces, mirrors, cold corners of rooms, wardrobes and behind furniture or beds which are against outside walls are at risk of condensation. Walls of unheated rooms or single glazed windows and metal frames are also at risk.

Mould growth in your home is not only causing damage to the property but it is also unhealthy to live with and needs to be tackled.

## mould growth is a sign of **damp conditions which can be a result of:**

- structural problems; and/or
- plumbing leaks from fixtures and fittings; and/or
- **condensation.**

The first two are dealt with by your landlord carrying out the necessary repairs but YOU can take action against condensation right now.

## action you can take to **reduce condensation**

### 1. IMPROVE VENTILATION:

- **Use the extractor fan** in the bathroom and kitchen (if fitted) or slightly open a window when taking a shower, bath or cooking.
- **Leave the windows slightly open** for half an hour after showering / cooking to get rid of the excess moisture in the air. Open at least one window in each room for some part of the day to renew the air. If your property has tilt and turn style windows, use the tilt position.
- **Keep radiators uncovered** and move furniture away from the outside walls to allow air to circulate.
- **Do not block vents.** Properties are fitted with vents and windows with **trickle vents**, these are there for a reason and should not be blocked / closed. Trickle vents allow a small amount of external air to enter a room at the top of a window which, in turn, allows air to circulate in the window space via convection.
- **Open curtains.** By leaving curtains closed, you will create a cold, dead space with no circulating air. By opening your curtains every morning you will allow air within the room to flow across the window space and carry away moisture.
- **Allow air to circulate in cupboards.** By keeping cupboard doors closed, air cannot circulate and mould can form on items within the cupboard. Ensure the doors are left slightly open and clothes not packed too tightly together to ensure air can circulate in these areas.

## 2. TURN UP THE HEATING:

- The colder your home is, the more likely you are to suffer from condensation. The process of heating your home will reduce the relative humidity, providing it is dry heat (e.g. from central heating system). Heating will counter-balance most of all the moisture produced by modern living.
- Try to make sure that all rooms are at least partially heated. To prevent condensation, the heat has to keep room surfaces reasonably warm, above 15°C (this will stop condensation forming on external walls). It takes time for a cold building to warm up, so it is better to have a small amount of heat for a long period than a lot of heat for a short period.

## tips to produce less moisture

- When taking a bath try putting **cold water in the bath before adding hot** (it creates less steam this way!)
- After your bath, **close the door and open the window / turn on your extractor fan.**
- **Put lids on saucepans** so less steam is produced and food cooks quicker.
- **Wipe down windows and window sills every morning** to remove any sitting water produced by condensation.
- **Dry clothes outside whenever possible**, if you have an outside clothes line use it.
- **Use a vented tumble drier** (if provided).
- **Allow wet outdoor clothes to dry properly** before hanging in wardrobe or cupboard.
- **Remove wet clothes, towels and bathroom mats** and dry out on a daily basis as these will contribute to moisture retention in the air.
- **Do NOT hang clothes on radiators** – if drying clothes inside, ensure they have been spun dry in the washing machine and are not dripping wet before hanging them on a clothes horse in a ventilated room. Remember to close the door between this area and the rest of the property.
- **Buy a dehumidifying tray or moisture absorbing device** – these can be bought at any DIY shop or on Amazon for as little as £5 a unit. We recommend the Unibond Aero 360 (pure moisture absorber device) at approximately £20. Dehumidifying units are filled with moisture absorbing crystals, or similar substance, to absorb excess moisture. Please note: these units require emptying when full of water and the dehumidifying elements must be replaced.

## what to do if you spot mould

**... contact us straight away!**

Lawson & Thompson will inspect the property and advise you whether or not the mould / dampness is a result of condensation, structural problems or plumbing defects. If repairs are necessary we will make arrangements to have these carried out.

Any home is at risk of condensation. If the property is properly maintained and you as the tenant make small changes to your lifestyle, you should be able to live with condensation without ruining your clothes, furniture and your health.