

## ADVICE ABOUT CONDENSATION

Condensation occurs frequently during cold weather and the first signs of the problem can be easily spotted on windows and mirrors. Condensation is one of the most common causes of damp and mould in properties. It is created by moisture vapour in the air meeting a cold surface where it cools and forms small water droplets. Surfaces that are frequently exposed to condensation can become damp and provide an environment for mould to grow.

### What causes condensation?

Everyday activities can very quickly create moisture that can lead to a condensation problem. The main factors that cause condensation are:

- Too much moisture being produced in your home
- Not enough ventilation
- Cold surfaces and temperatures

### How to prevent condensation

#### ***Produce less moisture***

- Where possible dry clothes outdoors or in a bathroom or kitchen with an extractor fan running or the window open. Closing the door to this room during and after use will prevent the moisture spreading throughout the property.



- When showering and bathing keep the door closed and make sure your extractor fan is running. If possible open a window and leave it open for at least 10 minutes after washing.
- When cooking, open a window or run the extractor fan, keep lids on pans where possible and keep the door closed.
- Make sure the tumble dryers are adequately vented to the outside air.
- Where do you notice condensation on a surface, wipe it down with a cloth and ring the cloth out (do not put it on a radiator to dry).

#### ***Ventilate the property***

- It is important to remove moisture from the air inside the property. Open windows as much as possible, particularly first thing in the morning or after cooking or bathing. Most windows are fitted with trickle vents (small slots to the top of the window which can be opened). These are designed to provide a small amount of ventilation and should be kept open at all times. Remember to securely close all windows when you leave the property.
- Open your curtains during the day to allow moisture to leave through vents.
- Condensation dampness can occur behind objects and furniture pushed up against walls, particularly where these are colder external walls. Try pulling items away from the walls to allow air circulation behind.
- Using a dehumidifier can also reduce the water vapour in the air inside your property. These can be purchased from a DIY store.
- Don't open loft hatches to provide ventilation- water vapour will rest on the underside of the roof where it will form water droplets. These may drop onto the insulation which will reduce effectiveness any may encourage mould growth.

**Remember – it is important to supply fresh air to your property, so never block vents or extractor fans.**

### **Keep surfaces warm**

- Warm air holds more moisture than cold air. Heating one room to a high temperature means the moisture will move to colder, unheated spaces so try to keep an even heat throughout your home. Also try to keep a low background temperature throughout your home rather than heating to a high temperature for short periods of time. This will ensure surfaces are kept warm and water droplets cannot form.



- Avoid using bottled gas heaters as these produce a high volume of water vapour.

### **Condensation or damp?**

- Condensation is often mistaken for damp which is caused by water entering your home in various ways including blocked gutters, loose or broken roof tiles and burst pipes. These causes may produce damp that is concentrated in one area and leaves a 'tidemark' beginning to show.

### **Dealing with mould**

- Mould growth can result from high condensation within your home. To kill mould, wipe the surface down with a fungicidal wash which carried Health and Safety Executive approval. Follow the manufacturers' instructions and remember to wear gloves and goggles to protect yourselves.
- When decorating choose a paint with fungicidal additive to prevent mould growth (contained in most paints specifying kitchen or bathroom use). You must have landlords written consent prior to any decoration.

**Handy hint – the only lasting way to prevent mould is to eliminate moisture in the air, if you deal with the condensation problem the mould should not reappear.**