

Damp and mould

How to avoid condensation

With the correct balance of heating and ventilation, condensation should be avoided. The heating helps keep the property warm and the ventilation will enable excess moisture laden air to escape.

Cold

21°C is a healthy room temperature. A temperature that drops below 19°C introduces health risks.

Lack of ventilation

The development of condensation can be controlled in part by increasing ventilation throughout the dwelling. In tenanted properties there is a preconception that ventilation means higher heating bills and as such there are growing examples of condensation which is exacerbated by the blocking up of trickle vents (vents within window frames) or traditional air vents which are found individually within rooms.

Condensation

Condensation occurs in a dwelling when warm moist air produced by ordinary activities such as showering, or cooking meets a cold surface such as an external wall or window.

The moisture laden air will remain internally if ventilation does not occur and will gravitate towards the nearest cold surface where it condenses.

Moisture is also naturally occurring in the air and when air temperatures drop it will release this water in droplet form. This is known as the dew point.

Condensation generally occurs during cold spells of weather. It will appear on cold surfaces and in microclimatic areas where there is little movement, for example behind a cupboard.

This will often lead to the formation of mould growth and mainly occurs in corners of rooms, in cupboards or on north facing walls, as these are generally the coldest.

Damp

Damp occurs in the home when there is a build-up of condensation or excess moisture. This is a problem because damp can help bacteria and fungus grow leading to mould build up.

Damp can also attract pests. It can be caused by leaking pipes, rain leaking in from the roof or window frame, or by a faulty damp course.

To prevent damp you should try to make sure your home is well ventilated, by opening your windows more for example. You should also make sure you cover any boiling water or foods and dry your clothes outside. If the weather means you must dry clothes inside, dry them in the bathroom with the door shut and the windows open. Making sure your loft is well insulated will also help control damp.

How to combat moisture production

Cover saucepans

Dry clothing outside rather than on radiators.

Wipe away condensation as quickly as it is spotted.

Keep window trickle vents open constantly and open windows as much as possible (especially after cooking or showering) to allow a through flow of air whilst maintaining a heat balance.

Ensure extractor fans are operational

Turn on the cold tap of the bath first so that when the hot water hits it does not produce as much steam.

Close doors in wet areas to stop the spread of moisture to other rooms.

Where possible position cupboards and drawers etc. Against internal walls.

How much moisture is typically produced in the home?

Drying clothes produces ten pints of water in an unvented tumble dryer.

Having a bath produces two pints of moisture.

Washing clothes produces one pint of moisture