

Condensation Prevention Advice

Normal daily activities (such as taking showers or baths, drying clothes, cooking and boiling kettles) produce warm air containing water vapour. If the warm air can't escape through an open window or air vent, it settles on a cold surface where it cools and forms condensation.

Homes that are heated intermittently are more likely to suffer with condensation problems than homes that are heated continuously. Continuous heating keeps the rooms warm, which reduces the risk of condensation forming. Condensation is most likely to appear on windows, colder parts of walls, around external doors and window openings and where ceilings and floors meet with outer walls. It can also appear in areas where air circulation is restricted, such as inside cupboards and behind furniture that is placed against an outside wall. If condensation keeps on occurring in the same place, it can sometimes cause black growth.

You are unlikely to prevent condensation in your home completely, but you should aim to reduce it to a level so that it doesn't cause problems. The following advice should help you to achieve this.

Produce less moisture

- Put lids on saucepans while you're cooking to reduce the amount of steam.
- Avoid drying laundry on a clothes airer or radiator. If you need to dry clothes indoors, open the window and close the door of the room where the clothes are drying, so that moisture can escape outside rather than circulate around your home.
- Make sure your tumble drier is properly vented to an open window or through an outside wall.

Stop moisture spreading

- While cooking or bathing use an extractor fan, open a window and keep the door closed. Keep the extractor fan on and the window open for about 20 minutes after you have finished.
- If condensation appears, wipe it off straight away.

Ventilate moisture away

- Leave window trickle vents open when rooms are occupied - even in the winter when your heating is on. These vents provide constant ventilation which removes water vapour.
- If you can, put wardrobes and other furniture against internal walls, leaving a gap between the wall and the furniture so that air can circulate around the room. Try not to overfill cupboards, wardrobes and drawers so that air can circulate around the contents.

Provide even heating

- Keep your home warm to avoid cold surfaces.
- If your home is unoccupied during the day, make sure the timer is set so that your home is warm by the time you return. During very cold weather it's better to leave the heating on during the day to maintain an even temperature. The temperature can be set a few degrees lower while you're out and turned up when you return.
- If you don't usually use all of the rooms in your home, you should still keep them heated to avoid cold areas. It's better to keep all rooms heated to a low temperature than to have some rooms heated to a high temperature while others have the heating turned off.

Treating mould

- If you notice mould growing in your home, you should treat it straight away with a fungicidal wash (available from most DIY stores), following the manufacturer's instructions. Keep checking the affected area for at least a week. If the mould reappears, wash it down again with the fungicidal wash to make sure the area is thoroughly sterilised.
- If mould or mildew is growing on clothing or carpets, you should dry clean them. Don't disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning, as you can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- To prevent mould returning, make sure that you control condensation in your home.