



Tenant Guide: Condensation & Mould

This guide will talk you through the best practices of preventing condensation in your home so that you can avoid the worst case scenario of mould forming.



What is condensation?

Condensation is dampness formed when air containing water vapour is cooled by contact with a cold surface and is usually worse during winter.

Warm air inside buildings is capable of holding moisture, so when warm, moist air touches a cold surface, such as a window or external wall, it is then no longer able to hold as much water vapour.

The air-borne moisture then turns into drops of water and collects on the cold surface. This is called condensation. If condensation is left untouched it will turn to black mould.

CONDENSATION VS DAMP

Condensation is different from damp. It is surface dampness; it mainly occurs on cold walls inside and other cold surfaces such as tiles and cold-water supply pipes under sinks and hand basins

Causes of condensation

Condensation is caused by day-to-day activities, coupled with lack of ventilation and background warmth. Let's break this down into activities to look out for in your home that could cause it:

WATER VAPOUR

The average household produces around 14 litres, or 24 pints of water vapour every day. This vapour is held in the warm air and must be allowed out of the property, otherwise condensation may form.

The main sources of water vapour are:

- Drying clothes
- Cooking
- Boiling Kettles
- Bathing/showering
- Unvented dryers
- Washing machines



HUMIDITY OF INDOOR AIR

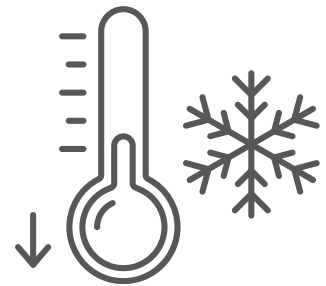
Condensation appears when the indoor air in a room cannot hold the level of moisture. Warm air can hold more moisture than cold air. For example, running a bath causes steam. As the air in the bathroom fills up with water vapour, it can no longer hold all the moisture that it contains. As a result, tiny drops of water appear, and develop first on cold surfaces such as mirrors and windowsills



Causes of condensation

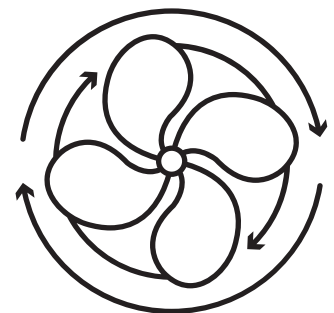
LOW TEMPERATURE

Condensation can be worse when it is cold. The humid air comes into contact with cold indoor surfaces, transforms into surface mist and then into water that runs down the window causing wooden frames to rot and wallpaper and painted walls to blister. The tell-tale signs of dampness are often found on north-facing walls, the cooler side of any home, and especially in corners of rooms.

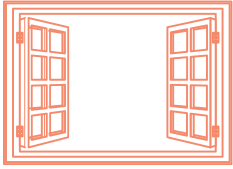


POOR VENTILATION

Humidity of indoor air can be reduced by ventilation. If air exchange is inadequate, then humidity accumulates indoors and leads to increased condensation. In addition, walls remain cool when a lack of free movement of indoor air prevents warm air from reaching them. Mould may therefore form where there is little movement of air, for example, in a windowless basement, or behind wardrobes and cupboards. In places where low ventilation comes together with cold surfaces (e.g., outside walls), they become the priority risk areas for mould growth.



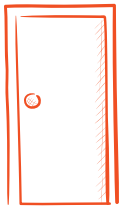
How to prevent condensation:



Keep the windows open and fan on for at least 30 minutes after cooking, bathing and showering.



Do not isolate bathrooms and kitchen extractor fans (if installed).



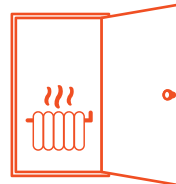
Try not to let rooms and walls become cold, or keep the doors closed to prevent moisture laden air entering cold rooms.



Put a lid on saucepans to keep the steam inside and produce less moisture



Dry washing outside if possible. Otherwise, hang it up in one room and keep the door closed, opening the window for shorts periods whilst clothes are damp.



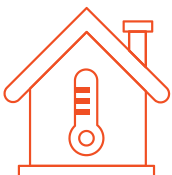
Do not heat up cold bedrooms in the evening by opening the door to heated rooms. The warm and humid air will condensate on the cold walls of the bedroom.



Move items of furniture away from the wall slightly so that air can pass behind them.



Leave cupboard doors open from time to time to air them.



Thermal comfort ranges are very subjective. When at home, the ideal temperature usually ranges between 19–22°C in the living room, kitchen and bathroom, and 16–20°C in all bedrooms. When temporarily away from home, the temperature in the rooms should not drop under 15°C.

What is mould?

Mould is almost exclusively caused by condensation and is usually found at the skirting level in rooms, in the corners of walls and ceilings or on cold surfaces. Mould can also appear on cold surfaces such as tiles and windowsills or behind furniture where the air flow is restricted. Mould and mildew can also grow on furnishings, curtains and even clothes and shoes and can spoil wallpaper and furnishings.

Small amounts of condensation can be found in most homes, but if you do not deal with it, and it is allowed to get worse, then black mould growth can occur. This can form on walls, surfaces personal possessions.

HOW TO REMOVE MOULD

1. Use a detergent, or create a bleach mixture (bleach to water 1:4) or use a specialist mould remover. For tighter spaces you could use a toothbrush and for more extensive areas use a scrubbing brush or cloth to remove the mould. It can be washed out of fabrics but may leave stains or spoil colours.

We recommend occupants wipe surfaces with a wet cloth and then wipe again with a dry cloth. The cloths must be disposed of or washed.

2. Be sure to dry the affected surfaces afterwards