



## Dampness and Condensation in Homes Fact Sheet



### TIPS TO PREVENT CONDENSATION, DAMP AND MOULD

Condensation is perhaps the most common form of damp that can appear in your home. It appears when warm air meets a colder surface, such as a wall or window. Things like washing, cooking, tumble driers, steam mops, pets and people's breath put moisture into the air inside your home. The more people and pets in your home, the higher the levels of moisture that needs to be removed from the air.

The reason condensation appears is due to moisture being present in the house, and the lack of adequate ventilation and heating. If not managed, condensation can lead to mould which can be potentially harmful to people and property.

If you don't prevent condensation mould will start to develop, and in ideal conditions mould can germinate in 24 hours and you will be able to see the mould within two to three weeks. The longer that moisture is present, the greater the chance for mould to grow and spread.

If your home is suffering from condensation you will start to see signs of it very quickly, such as:

- Damp or wet walls and windows and furniture
- Peeling wallpaper
- Signs of mould growth
- A musty smell on clothes in wardrobes.

You can prevent condensation build up and make sure your home remains damp and mould free. Below are a few suggestions on how to reduce condensation in your property.

### Did You Know

Water vapour is produced in relatively large quantities from normal day to day activities. A five-person household puts around 10+ litres of water into the air every day, without considering any heating:

- Breathing (asleep) - 0.3 litres
- Breathing (awake) - 0.85 litres
- Cooking - 3 litres
- Personal washing - 1 litre
- Washing and drying clothes - 5.5 litres

### TIPS

- Open windows, particularly bedroom windows, every morning for 5-10 minutes to let fresh air in and moisture out
- Make sure window trickle vents are open particularly in the bathroom and kitchen
- If fitted, make sure vents above living room and bedroom doors are open
- Avoid using paraffin or bottled gas heaters as they create high level of moisture
- Where fitted use extractor fans
- Do not switch off or block mechanical ventilation, including extractor fans
- Do not draught proof rooms that are prone to condensation or mould growth.
- Do not draught proof a room where there is a cooker or a fuel burning heater, for example, a gas fire
- It's important in a colder climate to heat your home and keep it warm



## Dampness and Condensation in Homes Fact Sheet



- Use moisture resistant paint when decorating the kitchen or bathroom
- The more people and pets in your home, the higher the levels of moisture that needs to be removed from the air

### TEMPERATURE

Keep the temperature inside your home constant. Recommended temperatures are:

- All living areas (kitchen and sitting room) 21c
- All other areas 17C

### WASHING AND DRYING CLOTHES

- Avoid drying clothes indoors, if possible, dry washing outdoors on a line. If you must, it should be in a well-ventilated room with the door closed
- Dehumidifiers can reduce moisture levels
- Make sure tumble driers are properly vented to the outside, unless it is a self-condensing type

### KITCHEN

- If you have a kitchen extractor fan, use it every time you cook. If you don't have an extractor fan, try to keep a window open. Leave the fan on or the window open for at least 10-15 minutes after you finish cooking to make sure moisture is removed from the room
- Cover pans when cooking to reduce the amount of moisture being released into the air
- Close the kitchen door when cooking. This will prevent moisture in the air going into colder rooms

### BATHROOM

- If you have a bathroom extractor fan, use it every time you shower or take a bath. If you don't have an extractor fan, open a window. Leave the fan on or the window open for at least 10 – 15 minutes after you finish to make sure the moisture has all gone. A sign that the bathroom is clear of moisture is when the bathroom mirror is no longer misted over
- Close the bathroom door when bathing or showering, as this will prevent moisture in the air going into colder rooms. Consider the use of a door closer

### FURNITURE

- Keep furniture away from external walls where possible. If that's not possible, keep at least 5 cm away from the external wall
- Do not overfill wardrobes or cupboards. A lack of ventilation can result in mould as air can't circulate freely inside

### TREATING MOULD

There are many treatments you can use for mould. You can buy a ready-made solution or make your own bleach solution to get rid of mould on walls. Mix one part bleach to four parts water, spray the affected area, scrub the mould using a brush, rinse the area with a damp cloth and dry it. Whichever treatment you choose, follow the guidance, always protect yourself with rubber gloves, goggles, and a mask. You should also open a window for ventilation while you work.