

CONDENSATION

What is Condensation?

Condensation occurs when air laden with water vapour (e.g. from cooking, showering or drying washing) cools on contact with a cool surface. Condensation frequently occurs during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and in areas of the dwelling where there is little movement of air. Condensation is often found near or on windows, cold wall surfaces and in or behind cupboards/wardrobes. It also often forms on north facing walls.

How to Minimise Condensation

1. Produce less moisture

- Cover boiling pans and turn kettles off.
- Shut the kitchen door when cooking.
- Dry washing outdoors, or in the bathroom with the door closed, window open or fan turned on.
- Vent tumble dryers using proper vent kits or use a self-condensing type.
- Avoid using paraffin and portable gas heaters as these add moisture to the air.

2. Ventilate to Remove Moisture from Air

- Keep a small window or trickle ventilator open when the room is in use.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when you are using them, by opening the windows or using fans if they are fitted. Ideally, fit a humidistat controlled fan, one which will operate automatically at a set humidity level. They are cheap to run and effective.
- Prevent warm damp air from spreading by keeping kitchen and bathroom doors closed when the room is in use.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes and do not put too many things in them so preventing air circulation. Where possible, put them on internal walls.
- The use of dehumidifiers will help to dry out damp in newly built houses and can also help to reduce condensation in warm rooms with a lot of moisture. Dehumidifiers are, however, little use in cold damp rooms.

3. Keep your Home Warm

- Heat your home at low levels for a long time rather than high levels for short periods; this will ensure that few cold surfaces are in the home. Heat the home even when there is no one there.
- Heat using a dry heat source, for example gas central heating or electric storage heaters or a fitted gas fire. Do not use paraffin or portable gas heaters.
- Secondary and double glazing of windows also reduces heat-loss and draughts.
- Insulation in the loft, cavity wall insulation and sensible draught proofing will help to keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills.

Dealing with Mould Growth

To kill mould and prevent growth:

- Wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal solution.
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould growth. Please note - this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness.