

CONDENSATION AND MOULD Fact Sheet

Condensation occurs when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface. The air is cooled causing the water vapour to condense into moisture on non-absorbent surfaces as droplets and water film. Condensation if left unnoticed can form mould growth, deterioration of finishes and rotting of timber.

The direct cause of condensation is not always easy to determine and is often a combination of a low air temperature, high humidity, poor ventilation, limited insulation but principally from the carrying out of everyday household tasks such as washing, cooking, drying clothes, showering and bathing and of course breathing.

Some helpful tips to reduce the levels of condensation and the likelihood of excessive dampness and mould growth:

- Always keep the house well ventilated. Kitchens and bathrooms require more ventilation due to cooking, washing, bathing and drying creating high levels of moisture. Close doors when these rooms are in use as this helps stop moisture reaching other rooms, particularly bedrooms which are often colder and therefore more vulnerable for condensation.
- Good ventilation of kitchens when washing or drying clothes or cooking is essential. Keep trickle vents open at all times. Always cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once water has boiled. Do not leave kettles boiling. Do not use bottled gas heaters or paraffin heaters.
- If possible dry washing outdoors. If washing is put to dry, for example, in a bathroom or kitchen, open a window or turn on the extractor fan. Do not leave the room doors open or moist air will spread to other rooms. If you use a tumble dryer make sure it is vented to the outside unless it is of the new condensing type. Do not use unventilated airing cupboards for drying clothes as this will encourage a moisture build up. Avoid the drying of clothes on radiators, use clothes airers.
- After bathing, keep the bathroom window open, and shut the door for long enough to dry off the bathroom. If possible wipe down the damp wall surfaces with a dry cloth or towel.
- Try and make sure all rooms are at least partially heated especially in colder weather. Condensation often occurs in unheated bedrooms or storage rooms.
- Ensure airbricks are not blocked.

- Avoid overcrowding rooms with storage or cupboards with tightly packed clothes for if there is no air circulating mould growth is likely.
- When possible provide continuous ventilation to a room using the trickle vents if fitted or slightly open windows retained on a lockable stay.
- If condensation mould does occur ventilate and clean off with preparatory mouldicide or fungicidal was or Jeyes Fluid solution.
- Wipe off condensation from windows and window sills and any runoff to prevent plastered surfaces deteriorating.