

Information sheet for tenants - preventing damp and condensation problems

Most damp problems are caused by condensation. This letter explains how you can keep it to a minimum, so reducing the risk of dampness and mould growth.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it.

If the air gets colder it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath. It appears in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

***** 3 steps to avoid condensation *****

1. Produce less moisture

Some ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

Cooking: To reduce the amount of moisture, cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.

Washing clothes: Put washing outdoors to dry if you can. Or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. It is best to fit a fan that can be switched to run continuously for clothes drying. If you have a tumble dryer make sure you vent it to the outside (unless it is the self-condensing type).

2. Ventilate to remove the moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts.

Some ventilation is needed to get rid of moisture being produced all the time, including that from people's breath. Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open all the time if possible, and especially when someone is in the room.

You need much more ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom when cooking, washing up, bathing and drying clothes. This means opening the windows wider. Better still, use a humidistat-controlled electric fan (these come on automatically when the air becomes humid and are cheap to run).

Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan. It will help to draughtproof these doors. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.

Allow space for the air to circulate in and around your furniture.

Open doors to ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Leave space between the backs of wardrobes and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls, i.e. walls which have a room on both sides, rather than against outside walls.

When you have a curtain or blind drawn, it makes the surface of the window cooler and increases condensation, especially with single glazed windows. Trickle ventilators can help reduce the problem - please ensure these are always set on open.

3. Heat your home a little more

In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm enough to avoid condensation is to keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home. This is very important in flats and bungalows and other dwellings where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room. If you have central heating set it to provide background warmth in all rooms including unused rooms. Remember to provide background ventilation at the same time.

Thank you for your co-operation.