

Preventing Condensation



What is condensation?

When warm moist air produced by ordinary household tasks such as cooking and bathing hits a cold surface (for example a cold wall or a window) - condensation occurs. Unless the moist air can escape to the outside through an open window, air vent or extractor fan, it will always stay in your home moving around until it finds a cold spot where it can condense.

Condensation can cause dampness and mould growth in your home. This looks unpleasant and can increase the risk of respiratory illness. It can also cause wooden window frames to rot. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum.

How can I tell if I have condensation or if it's a different damp problem?

Moisture in the air inside your home causes condensation. This leaflet explains how you can reduce condensation and prevent mould forming.

A fault in the structure of the building can cause damp. There are two basic types of damp:

- Penetrating damp happens when water enters your home through an external defect (for example, a crack in a wall or a loose roof tile).

- Rising damp is when there is a problem with the damp-proof course or membrane and water rises from the ground into the walls or floor.

Rising damp, leaking plumbing and rain getting to the house (through the roof or around window frames) normally differ from condensation in that they usually leave a 'tidemark'.

What are the causes of condensation?

The three main causes of problem condensation are: high levels of moisture in the air, not enough ventilation and cool temperatures.

High levels of moisture in the air

There is always some moisture in the air, but many day-to-day tasks can increase this, including cooking, washing, using a tumble-drier without an external outlet (unless it is self-condensing), drying washing indoors and even breathing!

Causes of moisture

Everyday household tasks can be major contributors to condensation within properties, the table opposite shows the condensation these activities can create and the measures you can take to combat them.

| Cause | Amount | Possible Solutions |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drying Clothes (6lbs washing in an unvented tumble-dryer) | 10 pints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you use a tumble-dryer make sure it vents outside.• Don't dry clothes indoors if possible. If you have to, open the window and shut the door of the room where the clothes are drying, as this will let the moisture from the wet clothes go outside rather than circulate in your home.• Do not hang wet washing on radiators around your home - doing so is likely to cause condensation problems. |
| Washing Clothes | 1 pint | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide natural ventilation through opening a window to allow moisture to escape. |
| Using a paraffin or bottled gas heater (for 5 hours) | 3 pints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid using portable gas and paraffin heaters. They give off moisture so open a window if you have to use one.• Paraffin heaters, portable bottled gas heaters and fixed flueless gas heaters all produce heat, but they also cause water vapour.• Burning one gallon of gas or paraffin produces one gallon of water.• Paraffin and portable bottled gas heaters can also be dangerous and expensive to run. They can cost as much as, or even more than, heating using peak rate electricity. |
| Breathing (e.g. two sleeping adults for eight hours) | 1.5 pints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide natural ventilation through opening a window.• Open at least one window in each room for some part of the day.• Wipe down window-sills and windows to remove any sitting water or condensation. |
| Having a bath | 2 pints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use an extractor fan in the bathroom if you have one when you have a bath or shower.• Keep the bathroom door shut when in use to stop moisture moving around your home.• Try putting cold water in the bath before adding hot - it creates no steam this way!• If you have a combination boiler, experiment with the water thermostat at the boiler to get it to a usable temperature without the need to add cold water.• Leave the windows slightly open for half an hour after bathing to get rid of the moisture. Remember to shut them afterwards! |
| Cooking by gas (for 3 hours) | 3 pints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the extractor fan or open the window in the kitchen when cooking to let the moisture out.• Cover boiling pans with pan lids - this will also save fuel.• Close the kitchen door when cooking as this stops the moisture moving around your home.• If you have trickle vents above the windows, keep them open and don't block up any air vents. |

Inadequate ventilation

If the air in your home is unable to circulate freely it can increase your risk of condensation. Opening doors and windows (even if it is a small window and you close it when you go out) are simple ways to help keep your home ventilated. There are also other ways to improve air circulation in your home:

- If you have them, use extractor fans to ventilate fully the kitchen or bathroom. If you don't have extractor fans, keep doors to these rooms closed and open windows until the room has aired;
- Try to allow a space between the wall and any large pieces of furniture to enable air to circulate more freely;

- Prevent dampness in cupboards and wardrobes by keeping them ventilated. You may also find that if they are too cluttered air won't circulate properly – so don't overfill;
- You should open bedroom windows during the day to allow at least one complete air change;
- Make sure your tumble-dryer vents outside;
- Don't cover airbricks or ventilation grills.



Cool temperatures

The colder your home is, the more likely you are to suffer from condensation. Try to make sure that all rooms are at least partially heated. Condensation most often occurs in unheated bedrooms. To prevent condensation, the heat has to keep room surfaces reasonably warm. It takes time for a cold building to warm up, so it is better to have a small amount of heat for a long period, than a lot of heat for a short period.

Houses and flats left unoccupied and unheated during the day get cold, which encourages condensation. Whenever possible, it is best to keep the heating on, even at a low-level. In houses, the rooms above a heated living room benefit to some extent from heat rising through the floor. However, in bungalows and in most flats, this does not happen due to increased insulation.

Some rooms are especially cold because they have several outside walls, or lose heat through a room as well as walls. Such rooms are most likely to have condensation and some heating is therefore necessary. Even in a well-insulated house and with reasonable ventilation, it is likely to be necessary to keep all rooms in cold weather at no less than 10°C to avoid condensation. When living rooms are in use, you should raise their temperature to about 20°C.

What else can I do?

Should I buy a heat recovery fan?

Heat recovery fans are expensive, but they are a good investment. They cost about £250 to buy and install. They are effective as they get rid of the moisture (and smells) in the air, especially from:

- Kitchens and bathrooms;
- Recycle the heat at the same time;
- Bring fresh, filtered air into your home;
- Improve the health of your home.

Heat recovery fans should run continuously on a low speed setting.

What about dehumidifiers?

Installing a dehumidifier may not be the best way of tackling condensation. They are expensive to buy (£200 to £300) and need emptying every day. However, they are useful for drying damp buildings out, for example after leak damage, or for specific rooms. Dehumidifiers are no substitute for no-cost measures of reducing the water vapour put into the air and keeping rooms well ventilated.

Mould

Mould is a small fungus that thrives on damp areas in your home – especially wallpaper, furniture and clothing. The best way of tackling mould is to reduce the condensation levels and prevent it from growing.

Dampness from condensation often causes the growth of black mould on walls and other cold surfaces such as tiles. Mould and mildew can also grow on furnishings, curtains and even clothes in wardrobes. It may first appear in corners or behind cupboards, but it can spread across entire walls. Mould can spoil wallpaper and furnishings and can make your home unhealthy.

You can remove mould on washable surfaces by wiping down with detergents or mould removers. It can wash out of fabrics, but may leave stains or spoil colours.

What to do next

If you continue to experience condensation and problems with mould it may be necessary to have a technical survey carried out on your property. Please contact Customer Services to arrange this or if you need advice. We will send an inspector to assess the nature of the problem if needed.

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This leaflet is a guide to minimising condensation in your home. If you would like it translated or in a different format, contact us at the address below.

中文
Chinese

此传单是最大限度减少您家中冷凝现象的指南。如果您需要翻译版本或其他格式，请按如下地址与我们联系。

हिंदी
Hindi

ये लीफलेट आपके घर में संघनन / कन्डेन्सेशन संबंधी मार्गदर्शन का काम करता है। यदि आपको ये अनुवादित रूप में या अन्य किसी फॉरमेट में चाहिये, तब नीचे दिये गए पते पर हमसे संपर्क करें।

Magyar
Hungarian

Ez a szórólap utat mutat Önnek ahhoz, hogyan csökkentse minimálisra a páralecsapódást az otthonában. Ha szeretne fordítást kapni róla, vagy más formátumban szeretné olvasni, forduljon hozzánk az alábbi címen.

Latviešu
Latvian

Šī brošūra ir ceļvedis, lai līdz minimumam samazinātu kondensāciju jūsu mājā. Ja jūs vēlaties, lai to iztulko vai vēlaties to citā formātā, sazinieties ar mums izmantojot turpmāk minēto adresi.

Lietuviškai
Lithuanian

Šis informacinis lapelis – tai vadovas, kuriame paaikškinta, kaip maksimaliai sumažinti kondensaciją savo namuose. Jeigu norėtumėte teksto vertimo arba kitu formatu, susisiekti su mumis toliau nurodytu adresu.

Polski
Polish

Ulotka zawiera porady dotyczące minimalizacji poziomu wilgoci w mieszkaniu. Jeżeli potrzebne jest tłumaczenie lub inny format dokumentu, prosimy o kontakt z nami pod poniższym adresem.

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Punjabi

ਇਹ ਇਸ਼ਤਿਹਾਰ ਇੱਕ ਗਾਈਡ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਘਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਮੀ (ਕੰਡੇਨਸੇਸ਼ਨ) ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫੋਰਮੈਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اردو
Urdu

یہ لیفلیٹ آپ کے گھر میں سکھانے کو کم سے کم رکھنے کے لئے ایک گائیڈ ہے۔ اگر آپ اس کو ترجمے یا کسی اور شکل میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں، تو مندرجہ ذیل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔



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