

PREVENT CONDENSATION AND MOULD GROWTH IN YOUR HOME IN 3 EASY STEPS

Condensation in your home will lead to dampness and mould growth. The only lasting way to reduce condensation is to improve ventilation and produce less moisture.

This leaflet offers you tips and advice on how to keep condensation to a minimum.

What is condensation and how does it occur?

Condensation occurs when warm air (e.g. which can be generated when cooking or bathing) comes into contact with a cooler surface. It condenses and shows itself as moisture droplets on walls, ceilings, furniture, windows and on areas where there is little movement of air. The issue of condensation tends to be worse in winter months and is likely to lessen as temperatures rise.

Why is condensation a problem?

- Condensation can cause damp, which may turn into mould. Mould patches occur on cold surfaces where there is little movement of air due to poor ventilation.
- It can be commonly found on corners of walls, ceilings, on or near windows (cold spots), and behind furniture and cupboards.
- Condensation which transforms to mould can damage clothes, furniture, decorations and carpets.

Taking steps to avoid condensation in your home

Follow the three steps below to keep condensation to a minimum and in turn prevent mould growth:

1) Control levels of moisture production

- Do not dry clothes on radiators
- Dry washing outdoors on a line or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. Do not dry clothing in a cold unventilated room
- Cover pans whilst cooking
- Ensure kitchen door is closed whilst cooking and keep windows open
- Whilst using bathing facilities do not leave the bathroom door open
- Vent any tumble dryer on the outside, unless it is the self-condensing type. DIY kits are available for this

2) Ventilate to remove excess moisture

- Keep a small window or a trickle ventilator open in occupied rooms
- Ventilate unheated rooms for short periods of up to 15 minutes each day. On cold wet days, ventilating for long periods might make the room colder and the air more damp, which will increase condensation levels
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use.
- If applicable ensure extractor fans in bathroom and kitchen are working

3) Heat your home

- Although it is understood fuel poverty is a real issue for some tenants, where possible

keep your home warm or at an even temperature most of the time

- In cold weather, keep low background heating on where possible, even when no one is home. Most houses take quite a long time to warm up, and it may cost you more if you try to heat it up quickly in the evening
- It is important that your heating system is checked regularly so that it works efficiently

Other useful advice:

- Avoid putting too many things in cupboards as this stops the air circulating
- Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls
- Keep a sufficient gap between walls and furniture (such as wardrobes and beds) to promote air circulation
- Regularly wipe down surfaces such as windows which attract moisture
- Dehumidifiers may help to reduce condensation in warm rooms

Words of warning

- Do not block permanent ventilators
- Do not completely block chimneys; leave a hole about two bricks in size and fit a louvered grille over it
- Do not draught proof windows in the bathroom and kitchen
- Do not turn off condensation control fan equipment
- Do report non-functioning extractor fans

Other factors causing dampness

Condensation is not the only cause of dampness. Your home may be suffering from dampness resulting from the following:

- Leaking supply and wastepipes
- Slipped roof tiles or worn flat roofs
- Blocked guttering
- Gaps around window frames
- Cracked rendering and brickwork

As a final reminder

Managing condensation and preventing mould growth is your responsibility. To deal with it, please follow the 3 steps on page 2:

1. Control levels of moisture production
2. Ventilate the property suitably
3. Heat your home where possible.

If you do have mould or condensation issue, please send photographs to housing.repairs@harrow.gov.uk for a desktop survey providing all your details or call us directly on 020 8901 2630 if you cannot email Harrow council.

If you have any of the above that requires repairing or you require advice, please contact the Council online harrow.gov.uk/housing or on 020 8901 2630 for further advice.