



How to prevent damp and mould in your home

Damp inside a property can be caused by structural defects for example:

- leaking pipes, wastes or overflows.
- rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- rising damp due to a defective damp course or because there is no damp course. This often leaves a tide-mark.
- condensation.

This leaflet is aimed to help you reduce condensation and mould growth in your property. Any of the other causes of damp should be reported in the first instance to your landlord, to carry out the necessary repairs.

Why do you get condensation and mould?

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather conditions, as the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water will form on cold surfaces such as windows and walls – this is condensation. Black mould spots will occur on the damp surfaces where there is little movement of air due to poor ventilation. It can be commonly found on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes, cupboards and furniture.

Condensation

How to prevent damp and mould in your home

Contact us for more information

To find out more, call us on
020 8080 6587 or email
talk2us@barnethomes.org.

This leaflet can be made available in Braille or large print. It can also be translated or interpreted into languages other than English on request. Signers can be arranged for customers with hearing difficulties.

Barnet Homes

Why is condensation and mould growth a problem?

It damages clothes, furnishings and carpets. Damp housing encourages the growth of mould and mites which can lead to breathing problems.

Three steps to avoid condensation in your home

1. Produce less moisture

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

- cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling
- dry washing outdoors on a line or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on
- vent any tumble dryer on the outside, unless it is the self condensing type. DIY kits are available for this.



2. Ventilate to remove moisture

You can ventilate your home without causing draughts:

- keep a window ajar or a trickle ventilator open
- ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider.
- close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan
- ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too much in them as this stops the air circulating. Cut a ventilation slot in the back of each shelf or use slatted shelves. Cut 'breather' holes in doors and in the back of wardrobes and leave space between them and the wall. If possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.

3. Heating

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

Insulation and draught proofing will help keep your home warm and also cut fuel bills.

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 a room where there is a cooker or a fuel burning heater, like a gas fire
- do not draught proof windows in the bathroom and kitchen
- paraffin and portable flueless bottled gas heaters are forbidden for safety reasons
- don't switch off or disable extractor fans
- use lids on saucepans when cooking to stop moisture from steam filling the kitchen and condensing on surface
- don't put furniture directly next to external walls.

Preventing and treating mould growth

- regularly wipe down surfaces such as windows which attract moisture.
- treat any mould you may already have in your home. To kill and remove mould, wipe down affected walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash, which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of breathing problems.
- after treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to reduce or eliminate the source of condensation

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