

# Condensation and mould

How to reduce  
condensation and  
get rid of mould



# Condensation and mould

This leaflet gives you information about the causes of condensation and mould growth in your home, and how to prevent it.

Homes today are often very well insulated. This limits draughts and keeps the warmth in, but it can also cause extra condensation, because moist air becomes trapped indoors.

## What is condensation?

Condensation is the moisture that occurs when warmer air spreads to the cooler areas in a building and comes into contact with cold surfaces. Warm air can hold more moisture than cold air, which is why you sometimes get moisture on cold surfaces.



We generate moisture in our homes through normal living – for example when we bath, shower, boil kettles and even breathe. This is usually fine, but when there is a lot of moisture and we don't let it out, it has to find somewhere to settle.

When the damp air hits cool surfaces, such as walls and ceilings, mirrors, tiles and windows, the water vapour in it condenses back into water droplets. This condensation can cause mould to grow on walls, ceilings, windows, furniture and clothes.

## What is mould?

Moulds are fungi that can grow on almost any damp surface. You may notice a damp or musty smell before you see any visible signs of damp, because condensation often forms behind cupboards and wardrobes, where the air doesn't circulate.



Although mould is often black and speckled, it can also be green, yellow or brown in colour.

# Steps to **reduce** condensation

## 1. Produce less moisture

Ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture – often very quickly. You may be surprised at how much water is released into the air from these common tasks.

Source of water	Water released per day
Four people breathing	2.5 litres
Cooking for four people	2 litres
Washing up	1 litre
Clothes washing	2 litres
Clothes drying	6 litres

To limit the amount of moisture in your home, you should:

- cover boiling pans of water in the kitchen
- avoid paraffin and portable gas heaters – which can produce six litres of moisture a day
- either avoid drying washed clothes inside your home or make sure there is plenty of ventilation – don't dry clothes on radiators, consider instead drying them in the bathroom with the light on to keep the fan running
- always vent tumble dryers to the outside using proper vent kits, or use a self-condensing dryer.



## 2. Ventilate to remove moisture

The presence of condensation and mould do not mean that there is anything wrong with the building. They are more likely to occur in buildings with solid walls, as these tend to have less insulation. You can help to minimise condensation by increasing the air flow.

You may notice fixed air vents around your home. Please make sure these aren't blocked.

Keep a small window open when a room is in use. Modern windows may have a small vent at the top which you could leave open.

Limit the amount of furniture you have in your rooms to increase the air flow.

Stop damp air spreading around your home by keeping kitchen and bathroom doors closed when these rooms are being used.

Allow moist air to escape to the outside from your kitchen and bathroom when you are using them. Ideally, use your extractor fan, or open a window. Don't completely draughtproof windows in these rooms.

Allow air movement in cupboards and wardrobes. Don't put too many things in them as this can stop the air from flowing freely. Where possible, put your cupboards and wardrobes alongside internal walls.



## 3. Keep your home warm

Heat your home at low levels for a long time rather than at high levels for a short time. This will help to get rid of any cold surfaces in your home and reduce condensation. Consider keeping the heating on low even when there is no-one there.

Consider using lined curtains in the winter months, as this will help to insulate and draughtproof your windows.

Use only a dry heat source, for example gas central heating, electric storage heaters or a fitted gas fire.



# Dealing with mould growth

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Try to avoid mould starting in the first place by following the advice in this leaflet about reducing condensation.

Mould on washable surfaces can be removed with a fungicide solution, available from DIY stores. However, cleaning off the mould only provides a temporary solution, as it could grow back.

You may be able to wash material or other items, but this may not always remove mould stains.

Don't be tempted to paint over mould. You must clean it properly first and then use a special paint to help prevent the mould from returning.

Finally, although mould growth is usually caused by damp from condensation, it can also come from:

- leaking pipes, waste overflows or blocked guttering, or
- a leaking roof.

If you believe any of these could be causing the damp in your home, please report this to the Service Centre.



For help with translations, or if a large type, Braille or taped summary would be useful, please contact the Service Centre.

### Arabic

لمساعدتك في الترجمة يرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة على هاتف 0300 303 1771.

### Bengali

অনুবাদ সাহায্য পেতে হলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারে 0300 303 1682 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

### French

Si vous souhaitez recevoir de l'aide avec vos traductions, appelez le 0300 303 1771.

### Somali

Wixii ah caawimo turjumaan ka soo wac Xarunta Adeegga telefoonka 0300 303 1771.

### Spanish

Si necesita que le ayudemos con alguna traducción, llámenos al 0300 303 1771.

### Turkish

Tercüme konusunda yardım için 0300 303 1683 'den Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.

## Contact us

Service Centre opening hours, 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday

If you live on the UK mainland, phone **0300 303 1771**

If you live on the Isle of Wight, phone **0300 303 1772**

Email [servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk](mailto:servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk) Website [www.shgroup.org.uk](http://www.shgroup.org.uk)

Write to **Service Centre, Southern Housing Group, PO Box 643, Horsham RH12 1XJ**



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