

How to check if your property has condensation.

What does it look like?

Condensation appears like water droplets and often black speckled mouldy.



Rising damp or damp coming into the property (for example leaking gutters) coming into the property will appear as a damp stained patch, and in some cases the plaster can be coming away from the wall. Another sign is a white powder or salt coming to the surface of the wall. If the property has just had a damp proof course, salt on the walls can be due to the wall drying out.

What causes Condensation?

Moisture is always in the air, even if you cannot see it. When the air gets cold, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear for example on your windows when you are cooking. This is condensation. It occurs mainly during cold weather and it appears on cold surfaces and places where air cannot circulate.

Why does condensation occur?

When you take a take a can of drink out of the fridge, cold water droplets appear on the surface. This is where the warm water vapour around us in the air, comes into contact with the cold surface of the can and changes into liquid water.

This is what also happens in your home. Condensation can be worse if there is:

- too much moisture in the air
- not enough ventilation
- rooms without enough heat

How do we produce water vapour in our homes?

When we cook in the kitchen or take a shower or bath in the bathroom, we produce moisture in the air. If these rooms are cold and do not have ventilation (an open window or extractor fan) so the moisture can escape, condensation is more likely to appear.

Daily Sources of Moisture	Moisture made per 24 hours
4 persons asleep for 8 hours	1 – 2 litres
2 persons active for 16 hours	1.5 – 3 litres

Daily Sources of Moisture	Moisture made per 24 hours
Cooking during the day	2 -4 litres
Bathing, washing up etc.	0.5 – 1 litres
Washing clothes	0.5 – 1 litres
Drying Clothes	3 – 7.5 litres

Condensation quiz

Question	Yes	No
Do you keep lids on pans when cooking?		
Do you open windows when cooking, allowing water vapour to escape?		
Do you dry your washing outside in the fresh air?		
Do you dry your washing outside in the fresh air?		
Is your extractor fan working and switched on?		
Do you open any windows during the day?		
Is your tumble dryer vented to the outside?		
Do you keep your heating on low all day when it's cold?		

Answers

If you answered yes then well done! For more tips to prevent condensation then read on. If you answered no then it's time to put the checklist into action and read on for more information and tips.

Tips to help you fight Condensation

Will not cost extra money

- Avoid drying your clothes indoors
- Open windows to let out the moist air when you have been bathing, cooking or washing
- Keep your kitchen and bathroom doors closed to stop warm moist air travelling to other rooms in the house
- Keep a small window slightly open or trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room

At low cost

- Use extractor fans
- Keep rooms warm when you are bathing, cooking and washing
- Avoid bottled gas fires, use your other heaters instead

All about Mould Growth

Mould grows where dampness exists usually caused by condensation. Every home contains mould spores which are dormant and completely harmless. Given the right conditions these spores will begin to grow into black mould. Mould causes the spores to spread in the air and gives off a musty smell. Clothes, furnishings and carpets can be spoilt and mould can attack foodstuffs resulting in dangerous toxins.

How to treat mould

Wash down the affected areas with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number.' Dry clean any soft furnishings and shampoo carpets. To stop mould coming back, redecorate using a good fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. You must then follow the steps given to stop condensation coming back.

