Your Guide to Condensation and mould

Condensation and mould commonly occurs due to normal environmental effects of modern day living. This guide will provide information to help you reduce condensation, prevent the growth of mould and what to do if you see any in your home.

Prevention
Taking preventative measures against mould is very important as you can deal with condensation before it actually develops.

To help prevent condensation:
- Reduce the amount of moisture used in your home
- Allow air to circulate
- Ensure you have sufficient ventilation

Hints and tips to reduce condensation:
- Close doors to your kitchen and bathroom when in use
- Cover pans, etc, when cooking
- Do not use portable gas or paraffin heaters
- Dry clothes outside and not on radiators. If you do need to dry clothes on a radiator - do so in the bathroom, open widows and close the door
- Having a bath? Run the cold water first to reduce steam
- Keep your property warm via steady background heating. Warmer air can retain moisture easier than cold air. The best temperature for your property is between 18 - 24°C
- Use an electronic dehumidifier if necessary
- Use extractor fans - where fitted

Further information
The council’s website includes an informative video to assist you in minimising condensation and mould growth. View this at www.dudley.gov.uk or on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/dudleymbc

Hints and tips to increase ventilation/air flow:
- You should allow fresh air to circulate as this helps to dry out wet surfaces. Moisture needs to escape
- After using the bathroom or kitchen - open windows
- Use and do not block vents
- Leave a gap between furniture and walls to enable air to move
- Use extractor fans and cooker hoods - if you have one
- Periodically leave cupboards, wardrobes and drawers open
- Position large pieces of furniture on internal walls

Hints and tips to tackle mould:
- Do not hang up clothes, bags, or shoes in wardrobes when they are still damp/wet
- Do not use bleach or general household cleaning products to clean mould infected areas. This can be hazardous and could make the situation worse

Treatment of mould
You can buy from DIY stores special kits and preventative paints which can be used to help deal with any mould problems, which have developed due to condensation.

Use the bath or shower just as long as needed
When having washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers installed - make sure they are vented externally
Wipe down surfaces regularly affected by condensation (eg walls, tiles, etc)
What is condensation and what causes it?

There is always moisture in the air, this forms part of our atmosphere. This moist air forms the basis of condensation. Condensation occurs when this warm moist air comes into contact with a cold, non-absorbent, surface. Water droplets are formed where these two meet, which can lead to pooling of water. Examples of cold surfaces where you may see the problem include walls, mirrors, wall tiles, windows and sometimes clothes.

Every day the amount of moisture generated by usual activities:

- Drying clothes (eg on radiators) generates 10 pints
- Boiling a kettle and cooking generates 6 pints
- Two people active in the house generates 4 pints
- Four people generate 3 pints while they are sleeping
- If a portable heater is used (paraffin or bottled gas) generates 3 pints
- Having a bath or shower generates on average 2 pints
- Washing clothes generates 1 pint

Warm moist air + cold surface = condensation

Moisture is created by day to day activities involving water within the home, including:

- Cooking
- Day to day activities such a breathing!
- Drying clothes insides (eg on radiators)
- Kettles and pans boiling liquid used for too long or without lids
- Taking showers/baths
- Using portable heaters (eg paraffin or bottled heaters)
- Washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers installed without external vents
- Washing up

Condensation tends to worsen during the winter months (October - April) when it is colder outside.

What is mould and what causes it?

Mould is a natural occurrence and is present in all properties. It is usually dormant and harmless, but can be triggered when conditions change, causing the spores to germinate.

Germination of the spores is often caused when condensation cannot dry out from the surface where it has collected. To dry out they need fresh air to circulate and warmth. Mould is usually black, but can also be white, grey, brown and green. Mould will grow on anything, unless it is specifically treated to combat this condition.

Mould and mildew are both fungi which grow naturally and which need damp conditions to take hold. You may find them on walls, cills, cupboards and clothes. Wallpaper and paint can also peel as water and fungi take hold on the base surface.

You will usually find mould due to condensation on:

- Behind cupboards (if on external wall)
- Behind wardrobes (if on external wall)
- Clothes
- Corners and edges of rooms
- Handbags
- Shoes
- Windows and adjacent walls

A few interesting facts about condensation

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