

CONDENSATION, DAMP AND MOULD

You have a duty to manage levels of condensation in your home by ensuring that it is sufficiently heated and ventilated



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Many people mistake the results of condensation for types of dampness associated with building defects. This is not the case. Condensation is simply damp that comes from extra moisture in the air inside your home.

There is always some moisture in the air even if you cannot see it, however when it comes into contact with a cold surface it “condenses” into water. This is often why your windows, ceramic tiles, pipe work and sometimes even walls will appear to run with water.

It is important to take steps to keep condensation under control. Too much condensation will make your home damp and unhealthy. These conditions can also damage your home by causing timber windows to rot or spoiling your paint or wallpaper (see Clause 29 of your Tenancy Conditions).

Lots of daily activities produce moisture i.e. cooking, drying washing, running baths and the use of portable gas or paraffin heaters.

The following steps can help you reduce the moisture in your home and minimise condensation:

Cooking

Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling. Open the kitchen window and keep the door closed.

Washing

Always dry washing outdoors if at all possible. Drying clothes anywhere indoors will increase the moisture level in your home. If drying clothes indoors is unavoidable, ensure you open the windows. If you have a tumble drier, make sure that it is vented to the outside (unless it is a self-condensing type) and does not discharge steam into your home.

Portable heaters

Don't use portable gas heaters or paraffin heaters. For every litre of fuel that you burn, a litre of moisture will be released into the house.

Ventilate your home

Make use of “trickle vents” or fanlight openings where they are fitted to your windows. Open windows daily - wherever possible, leave one window in each room ajar to allow circulation of air. Try to maintain some ventilation overnight also, if it is safe to do so.

Bathing

When running a bath, run both the hot and cold taps at the same time to reduce the amount of steam in the air. If you have a shower fitted it is wise to also fit an extractor fan. Keep the door closed and open the window as soon as you have finished in the bathroom.

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Furniture

Place furniture slightly away from outside walls to allow air to circulate behind. Don't over pack wardrobes and chests of drawers this will help to improve air circulation.

Heating

Make sure your home is adequately heated during cold weather. It is better to have the heating on continuously on a low setting than to have short bursts of high heat. This will also save you money.

You may find that in spite of taking these measures you still get a level of condensation in your home. If this happens you must:

- Wipe down the wet surfaces daily to prevent timber rotting and the formation of mould growth which can cause respiratory problems especially in the very young or elderly.
- Wash down any areas affected by mould with a proprietary mould killer or bleach following the manufacturer's instructions precisely.
- Don't brush down mould as you may encourage the spores to spread and infect other areas.
- If clothing or bedding is affected take it to the dry cleaners.

What will the Council do if you have condensation?

If you have condensation in your home, the Council will expect you to take all the steps listed here to try to control it. If you are still unable to deal with it effectively, you can request an inspection from your Area Property Surveyor. Before the visit, he may telephone to discuss the problem.

During the inspection the Surveyor will carry out a full survey of all the effected areas of your home and take moisture readings where appropriate.

In most cases no work will be necessary other than the possible installation of extract fans to your kitchen and/or bathroom if you do not already have them. However if the surveyor believes it will produce significant improvements and save the Council money, he may, at his discretion issue further work where:

- The condensation and mould growth is significant and poses a threat to health
- The problem is due to insufficient facilities for heating, ventilation or lack of insulation
- You have followed the advice given in this leaflet and taken all reasonable steps to control the problem.

The Council will not:

- Provide de-humidifiers or chemical moisture absorbent materials unless required by building regulations.
- Install extractor fans unless required by Building Regulations
- Take action to rectify occurrences of condensation in sheds, outhouses covered walkways, garages or other "Non-habitable Areas".
- Once the survey has been completed the surveyor will discuss their findings and inform you about any next steps or remedial actions that need to be taken. You will also receive a written report detailing the findings of the survey for you own records.

Further information may be found on the council's website:

winchester.gov.uk/housing/condensation

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If you have any particular needs which affect how you are able to use or be involved in our services or how you would like to receive information for example:

translation	interpreters
braille	audio tape
large print	sign language

Contact the Customer Service Centre
01962 840 222
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