



# Dealing with Damp, Mould and Condensation





# Damp

**Rising damp or penetrating damp** can cause problems in your home although it's less common than damp caused by condensation. If you think damp is causing a problem in your property you will need to seek advice as to what is causing it and how it can be fixed, please contact the STAR Housing Repairs Department on (0333 32 12 200) to inform us of the problem giving a brief description of its extent and location and one of our team will be in touch to investigate things further.



**Rising damp** is usually caused by a failing or bridged damp proof course, this allows ground moisture to rise up through the ground floor walls of your home. Sometimes to a height of one metre. You can usually identify rising damp because it is often associated with a tide mark at the edge of the area of dampness caused by salt deposits from ground water.

**Penetrating damp** can be any water that finds its way inside your property, it can occur at any level and often will be at a higher level than rising damp. It can occur for a multitude of reasons, the main culprits being; overflowing gutters caused by damage or blockages, missing, broken or slipped roof tiles, leaking water pipes and drains, badly fitting windows & doors, damaged or deteriorating mortar pointing, defective or damaged cladding, render, flashings as well as covered air bricks and uncapped disused chimneys.





## Condensation

During the colder months condensation becomes a major problem in many homes, it is caused when warm moist air hits a cold surface such as a window or external wall and condenses, running down the cold surface as water droplets. If not addressed this can develop into black mould which looks and smells bad and can cause serious health problems as well as extensive damage to clothes, furniture, books, the internal decoration of your home and its fabric.

Condensation can be a problem in any property no matter how old it is; however, it is often worse in homes that have been modernised as ventilation and the circulation of air has been reduced by the introduction of modern replacement windows & doors to prevent draughts. Controlling ventilation and air circulation around the home is very important in the prevention of condensation because this allows moisture filled air to escape to the outside preventing future problems inside your home.



## Areas Prone to condensation

### The following areas are particularly prone to condensation:

- Cold surfaces such as mirrors, windows and window frames.
- Kitchens and bathrooms where a lot of steam is created.
- Bedrooms, as we sleep we can add half a pint of water to the air overnight in the form of water vapour.
- Outside walls, walls of cooler rooms and cold corners of rooms.
- Wardrobes / cupboards and behind furniture against outside walls.

The major difference between condensation and other forms of dampness is that you can reduce or solve the problem just through changing behaviour in the home.



**Condensation in the home occurs when there is too much moisture in the air**

### Take steps to reduce the amount of moisture in the air by following the checklist below:

- In cold weather try and keep temperatures between 18-21°C in your main living areas.
- Don't block airbricks or air vents.
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down wall and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health & Safety Executive approved number.



- Dry washing outdoors whenever possible.
- Don't dry clothes on radiators. This will make your boiler work harder to heat your home and cost almost as much as using a tumble dryer and produce a lot of condensation.
- If you need to dry clothing indoors and don't have a tumble dryer, place clothes on a drying rack in a sunny room where a window can be opened slightly to ventilate the area and keep your internal door closed.
- No drying rack, then put your clothes on hangers and hang them from a curtain pole above a slightly opened window, this can also reduce the need for ironing.

### Take steps to reduce the amount of moisture in the air by following the checklist below:

- Close internal doors while cooking and open a window.
- Always ensure trickle vents are open when using a room (if you have them).
- Always use your mechanical extractor fan if you have one and never switch them off. Place lids on saucepans when cooking (this also reduces boiling times and helps to save money).
- Only boil as much water as you need in a kettle to reduce steam and save money.
- Open windows while bathing/washing/showering and leave them open for around 20 minutes after, if it is safe to do so.
- Take shorter and cooler showers.
- When running a bath always put the cold water in first, this results in significantly less condensation and is safer as it

eliminates the possibility of scalding.

- Wipe down windows / mirrors / tiles / shower doors with a window squeegee and mop up the moisture with a super absorbent cloth which can be wrung out in the sink.
- Don't leave wet towels lying around.
- Try drying yourself with a smaller towel and wringing it out, wrapping yourself in a bigger towel or dressing gown for warmth. Microfibre towels are good for this as they both absorb more water and dry quickly.
- Open windows trickle vents during the day or when going out, or open windows for at least 10-15 minutes every day.
- Don't put furniture including beds against outside walls and try to leave a gap between the external walls and furniture to allow movement / circulation.
- Hang thick, heavy lined curtains during the winter.

## Mould

**Condensation can cause mould to form in your home, lead to staining or damaging wall finishes, surfaces, window frames, furniture, fabrics and clothing.**

The mould and its spores carry the musty smell that is often associated with a damp house. Black mould can't grow where salt deposits are present (as with rising damp) and is therefore a sign of condensation. The best way to deal with mould is to remove it from walls using a special fungicidal wash which should be used in line with the manufacturer's instructions. Special paints are also available that will delay the return of the mould, but unless you take steps to reduce condensation it will eventually grow back.





**Please report any issues in your home, or ask us for advice by  
emailing [repairs@starhousing.org.uk](mailto:repairs@starhousing.org.uk)  
or calling 0333 32 12 200**

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