

Preventing Condensation

What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when warm air carrying water vapour comes into contact with a cold surface and becomes cooler. At this now lower temperature the air is unable to hold as much moisture and so it deposits the water droplets on the cold surface.

Why is condensation a problem?

Condensation normally appears on windows in the early morning and evaporates harmlessly as the house warms, it is only a problem when water vapour condenses on cold walls and black mould begins to appear.

Condensation dampness causes staining and mould growth and can severely damage wallpaper, wall surfaces, clothing and furniture. The black mould that is a familiar sight where there are severe condensation problems can cause ill health in some people. This is because the mould produces tiny spores or seeds, which can irritate the lungs and throat. It can be removed by washing down the walls with a mild solution of bleach, however it will grow back unless the condensation dampness is removed.



Where is condensation usually found?

- 🏠 Areas where condensation may appear are:
- 🏠 Walls and corners of unheated rooms, particularly at the rear of older houses.
- 🏠 A leak to a gutter or rain water pipe making a wall colder.
- 🏠 Mirrors and single glazed windows.
- 🏠 Kitchens and bathrooms.
- 🏠 Behind wardrobes and cupboards (particularly built-in cupboards against an outside wall).

Ways of dealing with condensation

In order to reduce condensation the amount of moisture in the air needs to be reduced and the temperature of both the air and the surfaces in the home need to be increased. Ventilation is the normal escape route for moist air. As the air in your house circulates, it is drawn outside through open windows, doors, extractor fans, airbricks and chimneys and is replaced by fresh air. If this exchange is prevented the air in the house will become saturated and will condense on the nearest cold surface.



Where is condensation usually found?

- 🏠 How can I improve ventilation and reduce condensation?
- 🏠 To allow air to circulate and to be exchanged for fresh air:
- 🏠 Fit extractor fans to the bathroom, utility room and kitchen.
- 🏠 Open windows on a regular basis and keep window trickle vents open.
- 🏠 Keep bathroom and kitchen doors shut during use to prevent moist air circulating.
- 🏠 After a bath/shower open the window and close the door to allow the moist air to escape.
- 🏠 Avoid still air pockets - areas between furniture and external walls and behind curtains may trap water vapour which will condense as temperatures drop.
- 🏠 Move furniture away from the walls for an hour or so as often as you can and don't leave heavy curtains closed during the day.

What else can I do to reduce condensation?

- 🏠 Keep lids on saucepans when cooking.
- 🏠 Dry clothes outside or fit a pipe that takes the tumble dryer's moisture outside.
- 🏠 Run the cold water for a bath before the hot.
- 🏠 Avoid using bottles gas or paraffin heaters.