

Condensation and Damp



Your guide to how we deal with
condensation and damp

Condensation – the facts

This booklet sets out Sandbourne Housing Association's approach to condensation and damp in our rented 18+ and our rented 60+ properties.

If you have exhausted all of the advice given and still have problems, please ring and ask to speak to our Housing Maintenance Team.

What is condensation?

Condensation is water droplets that form when moisture and steam in the air come into contact with a cold surface. If left unattended, condensation can lead to mould growths which not only look unsightly but can cause health problems in people with asthma and other respiratory conditions.

What can I do to avoid condensation?

There are two simple rules to help avoid condensation:

1. **Avoid creating excess moisture in the first place:**

- **Dry washing outside** wherever possible (or using the communal laundries in our 60+ schemes). If you must dry it inside, put it all on a clothes airer in one room with the window opened wide and the door closed. **NEVER** dry washing over radiators/heaters!
- **Vent tumble driers outside** – even hanging the hose out of an open window is better than nothing. If you have a condensing tumble drier you still need to open a window nearby as they do not condense all of the moisture. Where there are communal laundries, use those driers.

- Indoor plants can look lovely and brighten up a home, but they can create a bit of moisture so **try not to over-water them.**
- When in use, **leave heating on a low background heat.** A lot of condensation problems occur in the winter when the heating is up full and the windows are shut tight. Turning the heating on and off daily causes extreme changes in temperature in rooms, which can lead to condensation forming. It is better to leave a low background heat on constantly. Thermostatic radiator valves (where fitted) are perfect for this.
- **Cover pans when cooking** and don't leave kettles boiling and, if possible, close the door to prevent the steam going into colder rooms and forming condensation. Open a window or turn on your extractor fan, if you have one.
- If you have an **extractor fan, keep it clean** so that it works effectively.
- **Don't use gas bottles and paraffin heaters** as they produce a lot of moisture, along with a lot of toxic fumes. Not only does this form of heating cause excess condensation in your property, it is also a health and safety hazard and is not allowed under the terms of your tenancy.

2. Properly ventilate your home to stop moisture building up in one place:

- **Open all windows for at least 30 minutes a day** even in the winter. Rooms where a lot of moisture is created (like kitchens and bathrooms) will need the windows open longer.
- If you have **trickle vents**, leave these open as much as possible.
- If possible, **keep a window slightly open** when using a room as even breathing creates condensation.
- **Open windows after cooking or bathing/showering.** If you don't have a window in the bathroom/kitchen, make sure you leave the extractor fan running to clear the steam (and keep the door closed). Condensation collects first on mirrors and other glass so watch for these to clear before shutting the window/switching off the fan (this can take up to 15-20 minutes).
- If you don't have an extractor fan in your bathroom or kitchen, make sure that you **wipe down the surfaces after taking a shower or cooking to remove any moisture** that has settled on the surface. Don't then leave the cloth to dry in that room as this will simply re-create the moisture – wring it out and dry outside.
- **Leave at least a 5cm gap between bulky furniture and the walls** and avoid filling cupboards, wardrobes and spaces under beds to the brim. This allows the air to move around the

spaces and avoids suffocating the walls and causing mould growth. Where possible, put wardrobes on internal walls.

Did you know

Moisture is formed daily by simply living. Check out how many **litres** of water vapour are created by each of these day-to-day activities:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Taking a bath or shower | 1 litre |
| Tumble drier | 4 litres |
| Cooking | 2 litres |
| Two adults breathing | 2 litres |

A further example is that four people living in a three-bedroom house would create 56 litres (112 pints) of moisture a week from just breathing, cooking, showering and boiling the kettle.

What other tips are there?

When decorating, use anti-fungal paste to put up wallpaper to avoid mould growths between the wallpaper and the wall. Small problem areas (such as dark corners that don't seem to get aired easily) can be treated with an anti-fungal paint before decorating which will prevent the mould growing.

What if the worst should happen?

If you find mould growth, don't panic! Clean off the mould with household bleach, follow all the points above and monitor the area for a month. If you still have

problems, contact the office and we can come and have a look to see what we can advise. Mould tends only to grow in pure water forms (ie condensation) and does not usually indicate damp.

Need more information?

You can:

Write to us at our registered office:

Beech House, 28-30 Wimborne Road, Poole, BH15 2BU

Email us on: info@sandbourne.org.uk

Telephone us on: 01202 671222

Please note that telephone calls to the registered office number above may be recorded for information and training purposes.