

CONDENSATION

We find that condensation is a particular problem for our Landlords, Tenants and us, so we have devised this leaflet in order to help Tenants understand what it is, why it happens and how to manage it. If however, after you have tried the useful tips below and you are still experiencing problems please contact us on maintenance@sarahkenny.co.uk as soon as possible as we want your home to be a good place to live and will be happy to help you control the condensation and remove any mould growth. We have included photos which shows examples.

WHY DOES CONDENSATION OCCUR?

Condensation occurs in a dwelling when warm moist air produced by ordinary activities such as showering or cooking meets a cold surface such as an external wall or window.

The moisture laden air will remain internally if ventilation does not occur and will gravitate towards the nearest cold surface where it condenses.

Moisture is also naturally occurring in the air and when air temperatures drop it will release this water in droplet form. This is known as the dew point.

Condensation generally occurs during cold spells of weather. It will appear on cold surfaces and also in microclimatic areas where there is little movement; for example behind a cupboard. This will often lead to the formation of mould growth and mainly occurs in corners of rooms, in cupboards or on north facing walls, as these are generally the coldest.



The above show condensation occurring on windows, both double glazed and single glazed

WHERE DOES THE WATER COME FROM?

Water is produced by most activities and it is an ongoing process. See the below for some activities and the amount of water produced, you will be surprised.....



Over two and a half pints



Two pints doing the washing up



Drying clothes on a radiator...9 pints!

HOW TO AVOID CONDENSATION

Obviously we aren't suggesting that you avoid sleeping, breathing and cooking, but trying some of these useful tips should help. With the correct balance of heating and ventilation, condensation should be avoided. The heating helps keep the property warm and the ventilation will enable excess moisture laden air to escape.

***TIP – Improving Ventilation** opening windows, trickle vents. Using the thermostat; set it on for long periods on low setting or have it switched to operate automatically on shorter periods for at least seven hours a day. Do not adjust the thermostat manually when set but trust the system to regulate itself for you. Make sure there are no cold zones in the home by turning all radiators on.

The development of condensation can be controlled in part by increasing ventilation throughout the dwelling. There is a preconception that ventilation means higher heating bills and as such there are growing examples of condensation which is exacerbated by the blocking up of trickle vents (vents within window frames) or traditional air vents which are found individually within rooms.

***TIP – Improving Heating** constant temperature space heating. We recommend no less than 10 degrees and no more than 16 degrees. Also heat the whole property, not just rooms that you use, as this will create cold spots.

Try these useful tips below.....

- Cover saucepans when cooking – its also cheaper on the bills
- Dry clothing outside rather than on radiators. Using a local launderette for a big clothes wash is great and economical particularly if doing bed linen.
- Wipe away condensation as quickly as it's spotted. Don't dry the cloth that you have used on top of the radiator as this just releases the moisture back into the air
- Keep window trickle vents open constantly and open windows as much as possible (especially after cooking and showering) to allow a through flow of air whilst maintaining a heat balance.
- Ensure extractor fans are operational, you can test pull by holding a sheet of tissue paper against it and seeing if it sticks. If they do not work, please report them to us.
- Turn on the cold tap of the bath first so that when the hot water hits it doesn't produce as much steam.
- Don't turn extractor fans off in kitchens and bathrooms, they are there for a reason!
- Close doors in wet areas to stop the spread of moisture to other rooms. For example when cooking close the door.
- Where possible position cupboards and drawers etc. against internal walls.
- Open curtains, it helps the air circulate
- Get cleaning! This helps move the air around when you are moving furniture to clean skirting boards, corners and so on.
- Get into the habit of opening a window for half an hour before you go to bed – it helps you sleep too!



Condensation leading to black mould growth behind a dressing table.

- Move furniture around and away slightly from external walls as the above shows.

HOW CAN I HAVE MOULD WHEN I DON'T HAVE CONDENSATION?

You can have mould without ever seeing condensation. How is this? Mould occurs at around 68% humidity, condensation occurs at a higher percentage – 100% humidity. These figures demonstrate that you can have mould but still have clear windows with no condensation dampness showing.

HOW CAN I REMOVE THE MOULD?

We recommend regularly wiping down walls and windows with a fungicidal wash recognised by a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number' or a very mild bleach solution. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Take care when using these products as they can aggravate asthma.

IS THE MOULD BECAUSE OF DAMP OR CONDENSATION?

Many people think that the presence of mould is due to damp. This can be the case however, it is more than likely due to the lack of ventilation and balance of temperature.

The other causes of mould are –

Rising damp can occur if the damp proof course or membrane within the walls or floors of your dwelling has been breached. Prevalent in ground floor flats as well as houses due to damp proof course failure, something that generally occurs over a long period of time.



Condensation and mould at skirting boards level, commonly mistaken for rising damp

Penetrating damp occurs when rain seeps through cracks in brickwork or through missing tiles on external roof surfaces.

Blocked guttering may also mean water spills and saturates external walls.

External plumbing which is cracked may allow seepage into external parts.

Condensation will not be limited to certain areas and may cause growth in different areas of a room and you may also notice furniture and clothing become affected.