



A guide to reducing condensation and mould in your home

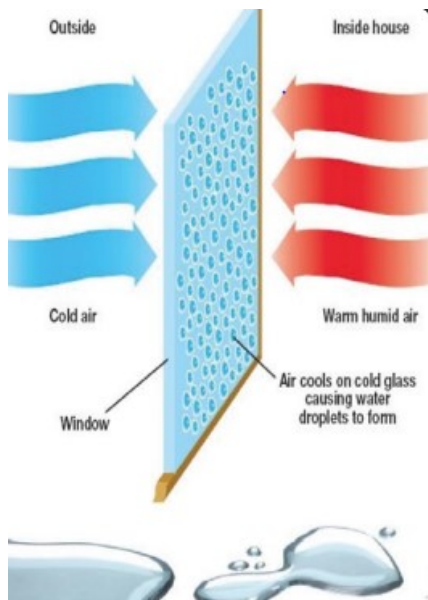


What is condensation?

Condensation happens when moisture in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and turns into water droplets.

This happens more in rooms where there is a lot of moisture, such as bathrooms and kitchens, or in rooms where there are a lot of people.

Condensation also forms in cold rooms where there is little movement of air. Condensation can form behind furniture, in corners of rooms or in wardrobes.



What causes condensation?

Condensation can be caused by the following:

- Too much moisture in the air, often created by steam from cooking and washing.
- Using portable paraffin and bottled-gas heaters.
- There not being enough ventilation.
- Extremes of temperature (for example, a kitchen being very warm and a bedroom very cold).
- Drying clothes inside the home, especially over radiators.

What condensation can do to your home:

Condensation can cause black mould to form on walls, furniture and soft furnishings (for example, curtains). It can even damage plasterwork and rot wooden window frames.

Damp conditions can also increase the number of house mites.

If anyone in your home has a breathing condition such as asthma or bronchitis, it is important that you control condensation because mould and house mites may make these conditions worse.



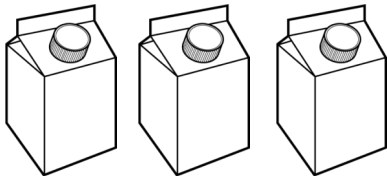
The moisture being produced in your home:

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to air inside our homes. Even breathing adds some moisture (remember when you breath on cold windows and mirrors it mists them up).

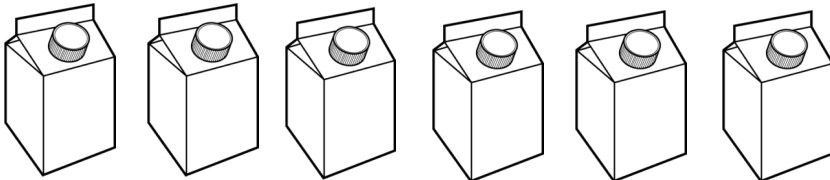
One sleeping person adds half a pint of water to the air overnight, and a twice that rate when active during the day.

To give you some idea of how much **moisture** could be produced in a day, here

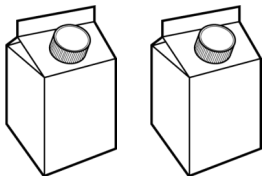
Two people active for one day = 3 pints



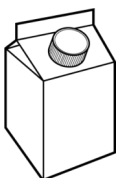
Cooking and boiling a kettle = 6 pints



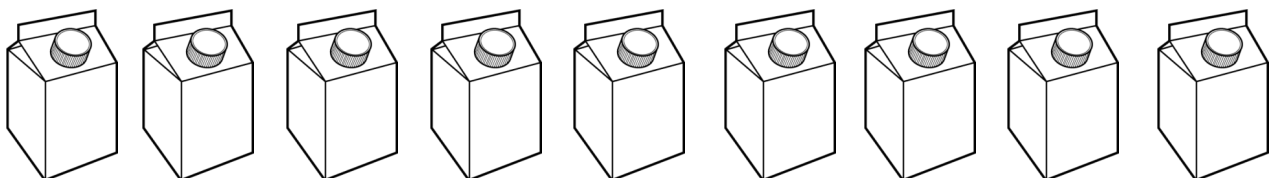
Having a bath or shower = 2 pints



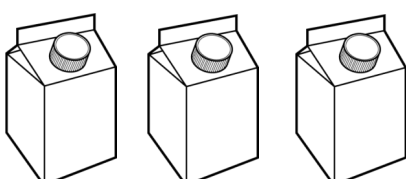
Washing clothes = 1 pints



Drying clothes = 9 pints



Using a paraffin or bottled-gas heater = 3 pints



Total amount of moisture produced in your home in one day = 24 pints

Simple things you can do to reduce levels of condensation in your home

- Use an extractor fan if you have one. They are cheap to run and are effective in quickly removing moisture from a room.
- Dry your windows and window sills every morning.
- In the kitchen and bathroom, dry any surfaces that get wet.
- Wring out your used cloth rather than drying it on a radiator or in front of a heater.
- Use a fungicidal cleaner to clean any walls, ceilings and paintwork affected by mould. Use a mould and mildew remover that carries a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) approved number, and make sure you follow the instructions.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to the outside (unless it's a condensing dryer).
- Always cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water for cooking.
- When filling your bath, run the cold water first then add the hot. (This will reduce the amount of steam 90%.)
- Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen. (Burning gas produces moisture. If your windows mist up, this is a sign of moisture)



Keeping your home at a constant temperature

Warm air holds more moisture than cooler air. So cool air is more likely to leave droplets of condensation round your home. Air is like a sponge, the warmer it is, the more moisture it will hold. Heating one room to a high temperature and leaving other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the rooms that aren't heated. It is better to have a constant level of heat throughout your home. Ideally between 17°C and 21°C . Keeping the temperature constant will help control condensation and works out cheaper than constantly heating a cold home to the temperature you want.

Ventilating your home

Ventilation can help reduce condensation in your home by allowing moist air to escape and drier air from outside to come in. Here are some ways you can increase the ventilation in your home.

- For about 30 minutes a day, leave a small window downstairs and a small one upstairs slightly open. The windows should be on opposite sides of the home, or diagonally opposite if you live in a flat. At the same time, open all of the inside doors, This will allow drier air to circulate throughout your home. This is called 'cross ventilation'.
- When cooking, washing up or washing by hand, open a window slightly (this is as good as opening it fully). Switch on your extractor hood or extractor fan if you have one.
- When using you kitchen and bathroom, close the door to prevent moisture escaping to the rest of the home and open a small window afterwards for about 20 minutes.
- Leave your bedroom window slightly open at night, or use trickle ventilators if you have them.
- Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls.



If you follow the advice in the leaflet, you should begin to notice a considerable improvement within four to six weeks. However, if the problem continues, it may require further review by our maintenance team. In this case please contact us on (01624) 685955 or housing@gov.im.