

DAMP *and* **MOULD**

Important information on causes and prevention

For more information, search 'damp and mould'
on the council's website www.lbbd.gov.uk

DAMP *and* MOULD



Damp and mould can happen when there is a build-up of moisture in the air. There is always some moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. It's produced during everyday activities such as cooking, bathing, drying clothes and even breathing.

It's important to report damp and mould as soon as you see it – this will allow us to carry out repairs before it gets any worse. We will ask you some questions to understand the extent of the damp and mould, and then arrange for someone to come to your home to resolve the issue. This involves treating the immediate problem as well as identifying other actions needed to help prevent it from coming back.

Types of DAMP *in the* HOME

The three most common kinds of damp in the home are:

- **Condensation**
- **Rising damp**
- **Penetrating damp.**

What causes condensation?

Warm, moist air condenses and forms water when it comes into contact with a cool surface, such as a wall or window. Condensation is not caused by water coming in from outside of your home, it is caused by moisture which is produced from inside the home.

If the condensation can't dry out it will cause mould to form on walls and furniture, and mildew to grow on clothes and other fabrics. Timber windows can become rotten because of this too.

There are four main factors that cause condensation:

- **Too much moisture being produced in the home**
- **Not enough ventilation**
- **Cold surfaces**
- **The temperature of your home.**

Everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside your home. You may notice that there is condensation on your windows first thing in the morning, this is because one person breathing adds half a pint of moisture to the air over night.

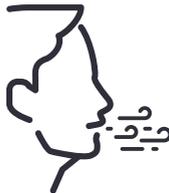
Some examples of how much moisture we produce:



Drying clothes
indoors
= 9 pints



Cooking and
using a kettle
= 6 pints



Breathing
(2 people at home
for 16 hours)
= 3 pints



Washing
dishes
= 2 pints



Taking a bath
or shower
= 2 pints

That's a total of **22 pints** or **10.4 litres** of extra moisture to the air inside your home.

What can I do to reduce condensation?

Reduce moisture in the air when using hot water

- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut to prevent steam getting into the colder rooms
- Use extractor fans when cooking or washing
- Open windows and vents so that steam can escape
- Wipe down condensation from cold surfaces such as windows, window sills and tiled surfaces in the kitchen and bathroom to prevent mould forming.

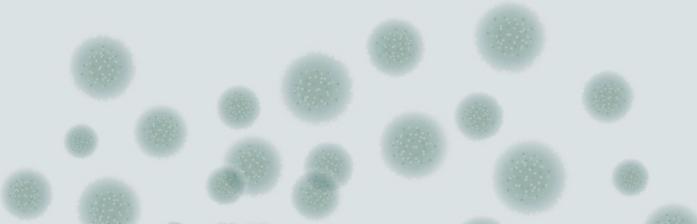
Increase ventilation to allow the moisture to escape

- Open windows daily for around 30 minutes to allow a change of air
- Move large items of furniture away from external walls and radiators to allow the air to circulate
- Allow air to circulate in wardrobes by not overfilling them.

Raise the temperature in your home

- Take extra steps to prevent heat loss by fitting a draught excluder to windows and doors, and use underlay under carpets
- Maintain a consistently warm level of heating throughout your home.

What can I do to remove mould and mildew?

- Report it immediately
 - Treat and remove mould before it becomes a deep black colour as it will be much harder to remove
 - Wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal (mould killing) wash, carefully following the manufacturer's instructions
 - Wash or dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo mouldy carpets
 - Re-decorate treated areas using a good quality fungicidal paint, carefully following the manufacturer's instructions.
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Rising damp

Rising damp is caused by ground water moving up through a wall. Most walls allow some water in, but it is usually stopped from causing damage by a barrier called a damp-proof course. Rising damp can happen if the damp-proof course in your home is either missing or not working properly, or the level of the ground outside your home is higher than your damp-proof course; allowing water to get above it.

If you have rising damp, you may notice damaged skirting boards and floorboards, crumbling or salt-stained plaster, and peeling paint and wallpaper. A typical sign of rising damp is a tide mark running along the wall.

Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is caused by water leaking through walls horizontally rather than by water travelling up walls (as is the case with rising damp). This type of damp is usually caused by structural problems such as faulty guttering or roofing.

Penetrating damp often shows up as damp patches on walls, ceilings or floors, which may darken when it rains. You are more likely to get penetrating damp if you live in an older building with solid walls, as cavity walls provide some protection.

If you think you may have damp and mould in your home, get in touch with us straight away. You can report it online at www.lbbd.gov.uk/damp-and-mould or by phone on **020 8215 3000**.

Top tips to reduce CONDENSATION

- ✓ Always cook with pan lids on
- ✓ If you have trickle vents fitted to your windows, keep them in the open position
- ✓ Open your windows if you notice them misting up. A window which is slightly open is as effective as opening the window fully
- ✓ If you have extractor fans fitted in your kitchen and bathroom, use them regularly. They're cheap to run and very effective
- ✓ When filling the bath, run the cold water first and then add the hot water. This will reduce the amount of steam produced by around 90 per cent
- ✓ Keep a medium to low level of heat throughout your home rather than heating some rooms on a high heat and others not at all
- ✗ Be careful not to over ventilate in the winter months as reducing the temperature of your home can make condensation worse
- ✗ Don't use portable bottled gas heaters as they give out a lot of moisture
- ✗ Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen as it produces moisture when burning gas.

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