



# Condensation, dampness and mould

A build-up of moisture in the home can cause a range of problems and can potentially damage the fabric of the building if allowed to continue.

Condensation is moisture that forms on cold surfaces and where there is limited air movement. The moisture is often created in kitchens and bathrooms but can cause damp or mould in other rooms. It's important to try to reduce condensation in the home as it can lead to mould and cause damp, which can affect the health of occupants.

Day to day activities like drying clothes, cooking and taking a shower add moisture to the air inside your home. Mould can develop on walls, ceilings, furniture, curtains, cushions and even on clothing stored in wardrobes and drawers.

Common problem areas:

- Corners of rooms
- Insides of windows
- External walls
- Behind furniture or even in cupboards or wardrobes.

If you do have mould growing, it's good to clean it off straight away to minimise any health risk, but you also need to fix the underlying damp problem to stop it coming back. If you don't have any leaks or rising damp issues, then the problem is almost certainly condensation. There are several things you can do to help avoid problems in the future:

## How to help reduce or remove Condensation:

### Ventilate

- It's important that your home is well ventilated to prevent too much water moisture building up in the air.
- Use window vents. Keep small vents in windows open and they'll allow moisture to escape without making the room too cold.
- Open windows and shut the doors in rooms where you're drying clothes (it's better to dry them outdoors if you can).
- Keep a small gap between your furniture and walls to let air circulate.
- Air rooms by opening windows – aim for at least ten minutes a day before you turn the heating on.



## Insulation and heating

- When the home is heated it is less likely that condensation will occur. It's best to set the home thermostat to provide a low background heat (for example 16 degrees) throughout the day to warm up the whole property. This will ensure that there will be minimal warm, wet air coming into contact with cold walls and surfaces.
- Draught proof internal kitchen and bathroom doors to help keep moisture from spreading throughout the house.

## Kitchen

- Close the kitchen door when cooking and use an extractor fan if you have one.
- Open the window to let moisture out.
- Use pan lids when you are cooking and turn the heat down once the water has boiled.
- Try to leave the fan on or the window open for 15 minutes after you've finished, as this will allow steam to clear.
- If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it's vented to the outside.

## Bathroom

- When bathing, fill the bath partly with cold water before filling with hot water.
- Close the bathroom door to prevent steam from moving to the rest of the property.
- Open a window or use an extractor fan to allow the steam to escape.

## Things to avoid

- Adding extra sealant or draught-proofing to windows in kitchens and bathrooms without vents or extractor fans.
- Sealing any room that has a cooker, boiler or heater.
- Blocking up air bricks in walls or small vents in windows. These are vital to help your home breathe.
- Avoid drying clothes indoors. If you do have to dry clothes inside, close the door of the room where they're drying and open a window in the room.
- Try to avoid cold spots – if there's a gap between your wall insulation and your loft insulation, for example, try to get this fixed as it will attract condensation and possibly mould.

## We're here to support you

Scottish Borders Council has a dedicated Liaison Officer who can offer advice and guidance to Landlords and Tenants.

If you're a Private Sector tenant and you've followed all the tips, are dealing with one of the other issues listed above, or still think there is an issue with dampness, mould or condensation in your home then contact Landlord Registration:

Telephone Housing Strategy 01896 661392  
Email: [housingenquiries@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:housingenquiries@scotborders.gov.uk)