

Damp, Mould and Condensation



This booklet gives some basic information about the different types of dampness that may affect your home and some advice on how to deal with it



If you have any damp, mould or condensation that you are concerned about, please get in touch and we will arrange a surveyor inspection. If you are not happy with the process that we go through to deal with any damp, mould or condensation queries you can also access our complaints process and have your case reviewed.

To find out more visit our website
www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/damp

What are the types of damp in my home?

1. Condensation

Condensation is by far the most common cause of dampness experienced by households. Condensation is caused by moisture in the air coming into contact with colder surfaces such as windows or walls. The water that forms on walls and windows provides an environment in which black mould can form. If you are experiencing a problem with condensation please get in touch asap so we can try to eliminate before mould occurs.



Condensation is usually a bigger issue during colder months and is usually found in the corner of rooms, on north facing walls and on or near windows and other colder surfaces. There are also higher risk rooms such as bathrooms and kitchens where more moisture is produced through bathing and cooking. It can also be found in areas where there is little circulation of air such as behind furniture, especially when they are against external walls.

Most homes are affected by condensation at some point but there are many courses of action that can be taken to reduce it. Moisture in the home is produced in many ways as the chart below demonstrates:

Activity	Pints of water added
Two people at home for 16 hours	4
Cooking and boiling a kettle over 24 hours	8
Having a bath or shower	2
Washing dishes	2
Drying clothes indoors	10
Bottled gas heater (used for 3 hours)	4

The amount of condensation depends on three factors:

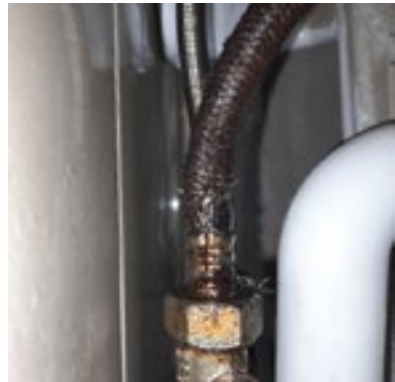
- How much water vapour is produced
- How cold or warm the property is
- How much air circulation or ventilation there is.

All three factors need to be looked at to reduce the problem. The first sign that there is a problem, you will see water vapour condensing on windows and other cold surfaces, which then takes a long time to disappear allowing surfaces to become damp. This will then go on to form black mould patches.

2. Plumbing leaks

Leaks from water pipes, especially in kitchens and bathrooms are relatively common. The affected areas look and feel damp to the touch and remains damp whatever the condition outside.

Whilst black mould rarely forms as a result of a leak (as it's usually found before it is too wet or if it is waste water the chemicals will prevent mould growth) you do often get brown staining.



When leaks appear where staining may not be obvious such as on brickwork or tiling, often the surfaces will look darker in appearance. Other signs can be floorboards

becoming spongy or having movement, or wallpaper bulging for example.

If you believe that you have a leak, then please contact North Devon Homes immediately as the sooner it is fixed the less damage it will cause.

3. Penetrating damp

This type of dampness is only usually found on external walls or in the case of roof leaks, on ceilings. It is caused by a defect to the home such as missing pointing to brickwork, missing roof tiles, cracked render etc. These defects will allow water to pass from the outside to inner surfaces of the property.

Penetrating damp is usually far more noticeable following a period of rain and will normally appear as a well defined 'damp patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch.



Black mould is rarely seen on areas affected by penetrating damp because the area is often too wet and the dampness can contain salts that have been picked up when passing through brickwork which prevents the growth of black mould.

4. Rising damp

This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. The water gets through or around a broken damp proof course (DPC), or it passes through brickwork and blockwork if the property was built without a DPC.

A DPC is a horizontal layer of waterproof material put



in the walls of a building just above ground level to stop moisture rising through the walls by capillary action.

Rising damp usually only affects

rooms at ground level or below (e.g. basements) as it usually does not rise more than 12 to 24 inches above the ground. It usually leaves a tide mark low down on a wall, and you may also notice white salts on the affected areas.

Rising damp will present all year round but is more noticeable in winter. If left untreated, it may cause plaster to crumble and wallpaper to lift.

Black mould is rarely seen where there is rising damp (and then only in the early stages) because it carries ground salts which prevent the formation of black mould.

Working together to create healthy homes

We want everyone to have a healthy and safe home to live in with their family. NDH can carry out repairs to leaks and water ingress and offer improvement to your home in terms of insulation and ventilation, however we do need to work together with customers to reduce moisture levels in your home which occur through normal living activities. Some simple tips and tricks around your home (continue reading for some of those tips) can help to reduce the risk of these issues occurring in your home.

We want the work we do to be a partnership between us as landlord and you as customer, to make sure your home is fit for purpose.

We know with day to day challenges and expenses some of the measures might not always be possible such as keeping the heating on low, but if this is a barrier for you, we want to do all we can to support you and will find other ways where we can help.

We have a Money Matters advice service in house to help work with people who may be struggling with the cost of energy or other expenses, so please do not stay silent if this is a problem for you as we may be able to help.

Six steps to reducing condensation and mould growth

Tip 1 - Produce less moisture

Daily activities produce a lot of moisture. To reduce this:

- Dry clothes outdoors

Avoid drying clothes indoors, or if you have to dry them inside do it on a clothes airer in the bathroom with the door closed, window open and with the extractor fan running.



Do not put clothes directly on a radiator as this releases moisture into the air very quickly, raising the

humidity levels and creating condensation. It also causes radiators to go rusty.

- Vent tumble dryers

Vent your tumble dryer to the outside and never into the home. Alternatively, you can buy a condensing tumble dryer, however you should still increase ventilation whilst these are being used as they can create moisture in the air.

- Cover pans

When cooking make sure all pans are covered with a lid or plate to keep the steam in and do not leave kettles boiling for longer than needed.



- Do not use paraffin or LPG heaters

These heaters produce large amounts of water vapour and are very expensive to run.

- Turn off the shower between use

Try turning the shower off during use so you only have it running whilst you are wetting or rinsing yourself rather than for the whole duration of your shower.

Tip 2 - Remove excess moisture

Always wipe the windows and window sills of your homes to remove condensation. This should be done with a cloth that you can wring out in the sink. It is also good to wipe down the moisture off the walls after a shower.

Tip 3 - Ventilate to remove moisture

- It is important to remove condensation and excess moisture by ventilating rooms. You can ventilate a room without making it draughty or causing it to become cold. To do this you may only need to open the window slightly or use the trickle vents if you have them. You

can also use extract fans to ventilate. This allows warm moist air to escape to the outside and lets in some colder but dry air.



- Always ventilate the kitchen or bathroom when in use and close the doors to these rooms to prevent the moisture escaping to other parts of the house. Continue to ventilate these rooms for a short time after a shower, bath or cooking until the condensation from windows has disappeared.

- Bedroom windows can also be left ajar over night or opened first thing in the morning. It is also good to throw back duvets to allow the bed and bedding to air.
- Ensure that curtains (including net curtains) are drawn back during the day to allow the air to circulate freely.
- Leave space behind the back of furniture and cold walls.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes and try not to over fill them as this prevents air from circulating. You should also ensure that any clothing or items being put in a cupboard are dry i.e. have been aired properly after washing or after use before being put away.
- If you have condensation on windows it is generally a sign that you are not ventilating enough. Consider the rooms where you are having the issue and think about



how you can increase ventilation. You can leave bedroom doors open at night if this is where the issue is, or encourage children to leave bedroom doors open if they

like to shut them for long periods of time.

- Good ventilation also provides a healthier home to live in and it ensures that levels of Carbon Dioxide (as the result of breathing) are kept within a healthy range. It also provides a drier environment, which not only reduces mould but also dust mites which people can be allergic to.

A well ventilated home also provides a healthier environment in which to live as it ensures that you have clean fresh air rather than stale air which has higher carbon dioxide levels

Tip 4 - Warmth versus ventilation

Striking the right balance between warmth and ventilation is important and can be very effective.

By opening windows or ventilating your home, it may appear that you are losing some heat, but what you are actually doing is allowing warm, moist air to escape and getting cool dry air to enter. Dry cool air is actually cheaper to heat than warm moist air.

Having double glazing installed can create problems because the older single glazed windows allowed draughts, which increased ventilation. You only need to ventilate to ensure that you do not have condensation forming.

Tip 5 - Heat your home a little more

In cold weather the best way to keep rooms warm and to avoid condensation is to keep low background heat on all day, rather than short bursts of high heat when you are in the house.



You can achieve this by turning down valves on radiators and reducing the temperature setting on the thermostat.

For those with older E7 heating ensure your

settings are set to Max input, Min output which will mean your energy use is spread over a longer period of time. For the newer Quantum heaters these should be left on low all the time as they cost more to heat back up from being turned off.

If you are unsure of how best to use your heating system then we can provide advice and guidance.

Tip 6 - Dealing with black mould

Mould spores are invisible to the human eye and are always present in the atmosphere both inside and outside of your home. They only become noticeable when they land on a surface upon which they can grow and multiply.

For mould to thrive and survive it needs four elements:

1. Moisture – obtained through condensation
2. Food such as wallpaper or emulsion paint
3. Suitable temperature
4. Oxygen (and some studies state higher levels of Carbon Dioxide)

Black mould can grow on walls, ceilings, furnishings and even on clothes and toys. To kill and remove mould:

- Carefully remove excess mould with a damp cloth and throw it away afterwards. Or if possible use a vacuum cleaner and empty the contents straight after cleaning. Do not brush mould as this releases the spores into the air.
- Wipe down affected areas using a fungicidal wash. Always wear rubber gloves and safety glasses.
- Tea tree oil is a natural antiseptic and disinfectant and is also great for cleaning especially on mould or mildew. You can dilute three to four drops of tea tree oil in two litres of water. Soak mildewed items in the solution or spray on to trouble spots using a plant mister. Wipe then rinse off. Always ensure that you carry out a patch test on small area of the fabric, material or surface beforehand to test it doesn't damage.
- After treatment redecorate using a fungicidal paint or wallpaper paste.
- Stick to dry cleaning mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.

By dealing with the causes of condensation you will automatically deal with the problem of mould



Need
help?

Phone us: 01271 312500

Email us: enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk

Complete our online forms on our website:
www.ndh-ltd.co.uk

Emergency out of hours service:
0800 917 0619



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