

# KEEPING YOUR HOME FREE FROM DAMP AND CONDENSATION



Caerphilly Homes  
Cartrefi Caerffili



# Is your home damp?

Damp is caused by

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows.
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- Rising damp due to a defective damp course, because there is no damp course or because the damp course has been bridged by gardening activities.

## ***These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark'.***

If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, it is probably condensation.

## **What is condensation?**

The most common cause of damp is condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, so reducing the risk of dampness and mould growth.

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You will notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, when the windows steam up whilst cooking, or the mirror mists over when you have a bath or shower.

The moisture that forms condensation comes from normal daily activities such as cooking, washing and drying clothes, washing dishes, showering and simply breathing.

Condensation occurs at any time but mainly during cold weather, it does not matter whether it is raining or dry. It does not leave a 'tidemark'. It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. Persistent condensation can result in mould growth, which will show up as patches of black spots on walls and ceilings. Mould can also affect clothing, furniture and shoes where it will often turn them green.

## **First steps against condensation**

You will need to take proper steps to deal with the condensation, but meanwhile there are some simple measures you can take right away.

- Open the windows to ventilate the room and let fresh air in.
- Wipe down the windows and sills every morning and wring out the cloth.
- Avoid drying clothes on the radiators in your home.

## **First steps against mould**

First treat the mould already in your home. If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear.

### ***To kill and remove mould:***

- Wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely.
- Ensure all the mould is thoroughly cleaned and cleared before redecorating and the wall is allowed to dry out for at least a week.
- After treatment redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth.

***The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould  
is to eliminate condensation***

## **How to avoid condensation**

**These four steps will help you reduce the condensation in your home.**

### **1. Produce less moisture**

Some ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

- To reduce the amount of moisture when cooking, cover saucepans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- Do not use paraffin and portable flue less bottled gas heaters as these heaters put a lot of moisture into the air – one gallon of gas or paraffin produces about a gallon of water.
- Put washing outdoors to dry if you can. Or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. If you have a tumble dryer make sure you vent it to the outside (unless it is the self-condensing type). DIY kits are available for this.

### **2. Ventilate to remove the moisture**

You can ventilate your home without making draughts. Ventilation is necessary to get rid of moisture being produced all the time, including that from people's breath.

- Keep a small window ajar or trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room.
- Open the windows for a short while every day to 'turn the air over' and remove stale air.
- Ventilate the kitchen and bathroom when in use. This means opening the windows wider and using an extract fan if you have one fitted. Leave the windows open, or the fan on for as long as possible after you have finished, or until the condensation has cleared.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms like bedrooms that are often colder and more likely to get condensation.
- Allow space for the air to circulate in and around your furniture,

open doors to ventilate cupboards and wardrobes, leave space between the backs of wardrobes and the wall. Position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls rather than against outside walls, where ever possible.

- Do not block permanent ventilators they are there for a purpose.
- Use the trickle ventilators in the top of your windows as much as possible.

### **3. Insulating your home and draught proofing of windows and outside doors**

Insulation in the loft, cavity wall insulation and draught proofing of windows and outside doors will help keep your home warm and you will have lower fuel bills as well. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely.

### **4. Heat your home a little more**

In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm enough to avoid condensation is to keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home. This is very important in flats and bungalows and other dwellings where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room. Remember to provide background ventilation at the same time.

The council is committed to improving the energy efficiency of tenants' homes as part of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) programme. This is being done via a mixture of measures such as insulation and heating upgrades, along with the provision of extractor fans. If you have not yet had this work done it will be programmed as part of the delivery to achieving WHQS.

## **Points to remember**

### **Produce less moisture:**

- Cover saucepans.
- Dry clothes outdoors.
- Ventilate your tumble dryer to the outside.
- Avoid using paraffin or flue-less bottled gas heaters.

### **Ventilate to remove moisture:**

- Ventilate all the time, especially when someone is in.
- Increase ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom when in use and shut the door.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes.
- Do not block permanent vents.
- Keep trickle ventilators open as much as possible.

### **Heat your home a little more**

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day, with background ventilation.
- Find out about benefits, rebates and help with fuel bills.

## **Further information and help with costs**

For further advice please contact the Councils Energy Advisor on Free phone 0800 0854145 who will be able to advise you about your entitlement to grant aid for improving the energy efficiency of your home.

If you are a council tenant and are aware of a defect which is causing a damp problem you should report the matter to your local area or neighbourhood housing office without delay.

Contact details for all the housing offices are provided below.

### **Area Housing Offices**

#### Upper Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office

Gilfach House

William Street

Gilfach

CF81 8ND

Tel: 01443 873535

urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

#### Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office

Pontllanfraith House

Blackwood Road

Pontllanfraith

NP12 2YW

Tel: 01495 235229

Fax: 01495 235036

eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

#### Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office

45 Attlee Court

Lansbury Park

Caerphilly

CF83 1QU

Tel: 02920 860917

Fax: 02920 881815

lansburyparknho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Graig-y-Rhacca Neighbourhood Housing Office  
Grays Gardens  
Graig-y-Rhacca  
Machen  
CF83 8TW  
Tel: 02920 853050  
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