

Keeping your home free from damp and condensation



If you would like to receive this information in another language or in another format such as large print, Braille or audio, please contact communications on 0845 849 2000 or email communications@shorelinehp.com

A — A



We have produced this leaflet to help you keep your home free from damp and condensation.

Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and make window frames rot. If your home is damp and cold it encourages the growth of mould and mites. Mites feed on mould and both can increase the risk of breathing problems in some people.

Some damp is caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, reducing the risk of damp and mould growth.

How do I know if it is condensation causing damp in my home?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. Damp can also come from:

- leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing or spilling from a blocked gutter
- water penetration around window frames or leaking through a cracked pipe
- rising damp due to a defective or missing damp course.

These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark' and you should have the necessary repairs carried out to remove this source of damp. Please report these repairs to us on **0845 849 2000**.

If your home is newly built it may be damp because the water used during its construction, for example plaster, is still drying out.

If your home is damp for any of these reasons it may take weeks of heating and ventilating to dry out. Hiring a dehumidifier will help.

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

What is condensation?

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 may notice it when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation usually occurs when there is a big difference between the temperature inside your home and the temperature outside so it usually occurs during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. Condensation does not leave a 'tidemark'. It usually appears on the outside walls of your home or in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows or in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

First steps against condensation

You will need to take proper steps to deal with condensation, but there are some steps you can take straight away:

- wipe down your windows and sills every morning. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.
- condensation channels and sponge strips can be bought at DIY shops. You can fit them to windows to collect condensation and help prevent window frames from rotting and damp forming under the sills. Please take care to make sure that you fit these devices properly.

How to avoid condensation

These three steps will help you reduce condensation and damp in your home.

1. Produce less moisture

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

Cooking:

- cover pans
- do not leave kettles boiling
- avoid using paraffin and portable flueless bottled-gas heaters as they put a lot of moisture into the air - one gallon of gas or paraffin produces about a gallon of water. If you have a problem with condensation try to find alternative means of heating.

Washing clothes:

- 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
- avoid drying damp clothes on radiators as all the moisture they contain goes straight into your room
- it is best to fit a fan that can be switched to run continuously for clothes drying
- 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 it draughty. Some ventilation is needed to prevent moisture being produced all the time, including that from people's breath.

Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open all the time if possible and especially when someone is in the room. Always be aware of safety and security and make sure that you remember to close your windows when you are leaving the property.

You need much more ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom especially when you are cooking, washing up, bathing or drying clothes so make sure you open the windows wider. Alternatively, use a humidistat-controlled electric fan (these come on automatically when the air becomes humid and are cheap to run).

Make sure you close kitchen and bathroom doors when you are using these rooms even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan. It will help to draughtproof these rooms and help stop moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which 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. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls - those walls which have a room on both sides - rather than against outside walls.

When you draw your curtains or blinds it makes the surface of the window cooler and increases condensation, especially with single glazed windows. As part of the Shoreline Electrical Standard, our properties will be fitted with extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom (if construction dictates) which will help reduce this problem.

The majority of our properties also have double glazed windows which:

- improve insulation - making your home more comfortable
- reduce heat loss - keeping you warmer while reducing your heating bills and saving you money.

3. Heat your home a little bit 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 keeps the air temperature at a constant and warms the actual fabric of the building.

This is very important in flats and bungalows and other properties where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room. If you have central heating set it to provide background warmth in all rooms including unused rooms.

Otherwise install suitable thermostatically controlled heaters where necessary (do not use paraffin or flueless bottled gas heaters for this purpose). The thermostats will help control heating and costs. Remember to provide background ventilation at the same time. Dehumidifiers will help dry out damp in newly built houses. They can also help reduce condensation but they are less effective in cold damp rooms.

Points to remember

Remove mould, reduce moisture:

- cover pans
- dry clothes outdoors
- vent your tumble dryer to the outside
- avoid using paraffin or flueless bottled gas heaters

Ventilate to remove moisture:

- ventilate all the time, especially when you are in your home
- increase ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom when in use and shut the door
- ventilate cupboards, wardrobes and blocked chimneys

Insulate and draughtproof:

- draughtproof windows and external doors
- find out if you are eligible for a grant or other help

Heat your home a little more:

- if possible, keep low background heating on all day, with background ventilation
- find out about benefits, rebates and help with fuel bills

First steps against mould

If you follow the advice in this leaflet it is less likely mould will form in your home. However, if condensation has created mould you will need to treat it. 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 which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'.

Make sure you wear rubber gloves and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Do not brush or vacuum mould as this will cause mould spores to be released into the air which can cause you breathing problems.

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 prevent dampness by following the information in this leaflet.

How can I report a damp problem?

To report a damp problem in your home please telephone **0845 849 2000 option 1**, email repairs@shorelinehp.com or visit www.shorelinehp.com

What do you think of our service?

If you feel we have not dealt with you or your problem correctly or you have any suggestions as to how we can improve our service please let us know. We use customer feedback to improve the services we provide. To make a complaint, compliment a service or make a suggestion please telephone **0845 849 2000**, email letusknow@shorelinehp.com visit www.shorelinehp.com or complete a let us know form available from any of our offices.

0845 849 2000

www.shorelinehp.com

info@shorelinehp.com



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication.

345

Registered in England and Wales Number: 4997871
Registered Charity Number: 1107876
Tenant Services Authority Registration Number: L4442

August 2011