

 **Maldon District**

A guide to condensation, damp and mould



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What is condensation and how does it appear?

Condensation is caused by **water vapour** or **moisture** in your home coming into contact with a colder surface, like **windows** or **walls**.

The resultant **water drops** (condensation) then soak into the wallpaper, paintwork, or even plasterwork. In time, these areas then attract **black mould** that grows on the surface.

Condensation mainly occurs during **colder periods** and can usually be found in room corners, north facing walls and on or near windows.

It is also found in areas where the **air circulation is poor**, such as behind wardrobes and beds (especially when pushed against external walls).

Black mould is frequently seen on this type of dampness and if not **treated**, will get worse.



Condensation on an external window



Black mould growing in the corner of a room



Black mould growing on plasterwork



How can I reduce condensation and mould in my home?

There are **five simple steps** you can follow to reduce condensation and mould growth in your home.

1

Create less moisture

2

Ventilate and remove excess moisture

3

Keep your home warm

4

Insulate your home

5

Treat mould growth straight away

••• Create less moisture

To reduce the amount moisture in your home, try the following...

Dry clothes **outdoors** if possible. Avoid drying clothes indoors or if you have to, dry them on a **clothes airer** in the **bathroom** with the **door closed** and either an **extractor fan** on or a **window slightly open**.

Vent **tumble driers** to the **outside** (never into the home) or buy a **condensing type** of tumble dryer.

Cover **pans** when cooking and don't leave **kettles boiling**.

Don't use **paraffin or gas bottle heaters**. They produce large amounts of water vapour and are very **expensive to run**.



••• Ventilate and remove excess moisture

Ventilation is vital to preventing mould and damp from appearing, so try the following...

Ventilate your **kitchen** when **washing** or **drying clothes**, or **cooking**. If you have an **electric extractor fan**, use it when cooking, or washing clothes. If not, open a **window** and close the **door** if you can, to help ventilate the room.

Ventilate your home for at least **30 mins to 1 hour** a day (But don't leave your windows open all day).

Always wipe your **windows** and **windowsills** each morning to remove any **condensation**. This is really important in **bedrooms**, **bathrooms** and **kitchens** – just opening the window is not enough.

If **washing** is dried in a **bathroom** or **kitchen**, open a **window**, or turn on the **extractor fan** to help ventilate the room.

It's also a good idea to **close the door** of that room so that **moist air** can't spread to other rooms and cause **condensation** in other parts of the home.



Keep your home warm

Keeping your home warm is a great way to reduce the amount of moisture indoors, so try the following...

Make sure that **every room** in the house is at least **partially heated**. Condensation most often occurs in **unheated** or **underheated** rooms.

To prevent condensation, the heat must keep room surfaces **reasonably warm**. It takes a long time for a **cold building** to warm up, so it is better to have a **small amount of heat** for a **long period** than a **lot of heat** for a **short time**.

Houses and flats left **unoccupied** and **unheated** during the day get very cold. Whenever possible, it is best to keep heating on, even if at a **low level**.

Not only does keeping the heat on help prevent **condensation, damp, and mould**, but it also helps prevent **internal water pipes** from **freezing**.



••• Insulate your home

Insulating and draught-proofing will help keep your home warm and save money on your heating bills, so try the following...

Insulate your **loft** to a depth of at least **30cm**.

Consider **secondary** or **double glazing**.

Consider **cavity wall insulation** or **internal dry lining**.

Draught-proof your **windows** and **external doors**, but don't block **permanent ventilators** or **rooms requiring ventilation**.

You might be eligible for a **grant** for insulating your home which may help to **reduce your bills**, so it's worth checking.

If you're a tenant in a **privately rented property**, or a **Housing association tenant**, speak to your **landlord** if you have concerns about the level of insulation in your property.



••• Treat mould growth straight away

Mould is a clear indicator of **moisture** and if caused by **condensation**, tells you that your heating, insulation or ventilation (or all three) may need improvement.

Treating the **cause of mould**, i.e., condensation, should stop it coming back, but there are some other things you can do:

Wipe down the walls with a **fungicidal wash** which carries a Health and Safety Executive '**Approval Number**' (Following the manufacturer's instructions carefully).

Dry-clean clothes and **shampoo carpets** which show signs of **mildew** (try not to vacuum as this can spread mould spores).

Re-decorate using a **fungicidal paint**. Be aware that painting or wallpapering over fungicidal paint may **reduce** its effectiveness.

Once the mould has been treated, follow **steps 1 to 4**.



New buildings

New buildings, or **recently decorated buildings** can take a longer time before they fully dry out.

While this is happening, they need **extra heat** and **ventilation**. Additionally, during the **first winter** of use, many new homes require more **heat** than they will need in **subsequent winters**.

For more information or advice about anything covered in this guide, please contact the **Environmental Health Team** at Maldon District Council.

Our details are below:



maldon.gov.uk



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