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Dealing with Condensation and Mould Growth.

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What Causes Condensation?

Condensation is caused when warm moist air hits a cold surface such as a window or external wall and condenses, running down the cold surface as water droplets. If left this can develop into black mould which looks and smells unpleasant.

The three main causes of condensation are:

- **Moisture produced by everyday activities**
- **Not enough ventilation**
- **Cool temperatures**

Cooking, drying clothes, bathing, even breathing adds to the moisture in the air. If this moisture is allowed to build up it can cause damp. It usually appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. This can cause black mould growth on walls, ceilings, furniture, clothing and even in or behind wardrobes and cupboards.

Some people do not realise that this mould growth is often caused by condensation from normal activities, mistakenly thinking these are signs of damp caused by problems with the property itself.

Condensation is usually at its worst during the winter and damage can occur not only to the building fabric but also to furnishings, clothes and decorative finishes.

Condensation can be a problem in any property no matter how old it is. It is often worse in homes that have been modernised as ventilation and the circulation of air is reduced.

This leaflet gives helpful advice on how to treat condensation in the home.

How much moisture can be produced in your home in a day?

2 people active for a day 3 pints

Cooking and boiling a kettle 6 pints

Having a bath or shower 2 pints

Washing dishes 2 pints

Drying clothes 9 pints

Total amount of moisture produced in your home for 1 day = 22 pints

What can you do?

There are four main ways to tackle the problem:

- Prevent moisture building up
- Ventilate your home
- Don't let moisture that is produced circulate throughout the house
- Keep your home warm.

Prevent moisture building up by:

- Wiping down surfaces where moisture settles such as windows and cills
- Cover boiling pans when cooking
- Dry clothes outside where possible
- Cover fish tanks to stop water evaporating into the air
- Make sure tumble dryers are vented to the outside
- Avoid using bottled gas or paraffin heaters as these produce a lot of moisture and can also be a health and safety risk if not used and stored appropriately
- If you have to dry clothes inside, do so in a small room with the doors closed and windows open.

Ventilate your home

- Open windows for a while each day or use the trickle/night vents, Nobody likes draughts, but some ventilation is vital
- Use the extractor fans in your kitchen and bathroom
- Allow air to circulate around furniture and in cupboards – you can do this by making sure cupboards and wardrobes aren't overfilled and there is space between the furniture and the wall. Do not put furniture against cold surfaces.



Important things to remember:

- Do not block permanent ventilators
- Never block a chimney opening
- Do not draught proof:
 - rooms where there is condensation or mould growth
 - rooms where there is a gas cooker or a fuel-burning heater, for example a gas fire
 - windows in the bathroom or kitchen

Don't let moisture circulate throughout the house:

- When cooking, bathing or washing, close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms. Increase ventilation by opening windows and using the extractor fan, even after you have finished.

Keep your home warm

Maintain a low constant heat when the weather is cold or wet – this is more effective than short bursts of high heat and needn't mean increased heating costs.

Your room thermostat should ideally be set between 18°C and 21°C.

Use the checklist at the back of this leaflet to help you reduce condensation in your home.

What to do if your home already has mould

The tips set out in this guide should help prevent mould growth, but what if you already have the problem? How do you get rid of it?

- Mould is a living organism and needs killing to get rid of it. To do this, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash – one which carries a Health and Safety Executive approved number – making sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions
- Do not disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning
- Do not use bleach or washing up liquid
- Treat any mould you may already have in your home then do what you can to reduce condensation. This will restrict new mould growth
- Mildewed clothes should be dry cleaned and any affected carpets shampooed

- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.



I have followed the advice in this leaflet, what do I do next?

If you have followed the advice given in this leaflet, then you should begin to notice a considerable improvement within four to six weeks.

Further useful information can be found on our website including short videos relating to condensation and heating your home.



Remember it is important to continuously ventilate your home.

Karbon can send you a small device called a humidistat that measures the temperature and humidity (moisture content) in your property- this can help you control condensation levels in your home.

If the problem persists, it may be due to another cause of damp or a leak. If you suspect you may have another form of dampness or a leaking pipe then this should be reported to the Customer Service team on **0300 300 1505** as soon as possible.

If you have difficulty paying your heating bills, or if you have fuel debt, please contact Karbon's Benefits and Money team. Their home energy advice service can help you manage fuel payments, get the best deals, challenge incorrect bills, and apply for grants to deal with fuel debt.

Call them on **0300 300 1505** or email **benefitsandmoney@isoshousing.co.uk**



Condensation prevention checklist

Bathroom checklist

- Open windows while bathing/ washing and leave them open for about 20 minutes afterwards, if it's safe to do so
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Take shorter showers
- When running a bath put the cold water in first; this results in significantly less steam
- Wipe down windows/mirrors/ tiles/shower doors with a window squeegee and mop up the moisture with a super absorbent cloth which can be rung out in the sink
- Don't leave wet towels lying around
- Try drying yourself with a smaller towel and wringing it out, wrapping yourself in a bigger towel or dressing gown for warmth. Microfibre towels are great for this as they absorb more water and dry quickly

Kitchen checklist

- Close internal doors while cooking and open windows
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Put lids on pans (this also reduces boiling times and helps save money)
- Only boil as much water as you need in a kettle to reduce steam

Living Room checklist

- Open window trickle vents during the day or when going out, or open windows for at least 10 minutes every day
- Lay thick carpet with a good thermal underlay
- Hang thick, heavy lined curtains during the winter

Bedroom checklist

- Wipe down windows with a window squeegee
- Open window trickle vents during the day or when going out, or open windows for at least 10 minutes every day
- Don't put furniture, including beds, against any outside walls and try and leave a gap between the wall and furniture to allow airflow
- Lay thick carpet with a good thermal underlay
- Hang thick, heavy lined curtains during the winter.

Decorating

- When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth
- Use thermal lining paper under wallpaper when decorating
- Use mould resistant paint on areas prone to mould such as ceiling above windows.

General Home Checklist

- In colder weather try and keep temperatures between 18-21°C in main living areas while indoors
- Don't block airbricks or air vents
- To kill and remove mould wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number
- Dry washing outside where possible
- If you have to dry clothing indoors, and don't have a tumble dryer, place clothes on a drying rack in a sunny room where a window can be opened
- No drying rack? Put your clothes on hangers and hang from a curtain pole above a slightly opened window; this can also reduce the need for ironing.