MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

How to tackle damp and condensation

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We all have a bit of condensation in our homes. If we don't deal with it, this can lead to more serious problems. Staining, and mould growth are all symptoms of condensation which can damage wallpaper, wall surfaces, window frames, furniture and clothing. This guide will help you make your home more comfortable.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if we can't see it. Cooking, bathing, drying clothes and breathing all puts moisturein the air.

If air gets cold it cannot hold all the moisture and it forms as liquid on cold surfaces.

You often see it form on tiles, windows and mirrors, but it is also forming unseen on other surfaces, especially walls.

How does it turn to mould?

Black mould forms on clean water so after a while, if condensation keeps forming, the mould will soon start to grow on it.

Where does it occur?

Usually in rooms where moisture is produced, like your kitchen, bedroom or bathroom, but also in rooms close by, where the moist air travels to and condenses on cooler surfaces.

The following areas are most at risk to condensation mould growth:

— around windows on the frames, the white mastic sealant and the plaster close to the frame
— walls of unheated rooms
— cold corners and uninsulated sloping ceilings
— wardrobes and cupboards and behind furniture against an outside wall.

How to prevent it

You can sort it out quite easily yourself. Follow these tips and you'll soon see the difference:

— keeps lids on saucepans whilst cooking
— make sure your tumble dryer is vented outside
— don't put wet clothes on radiators (if you dry

indoors, use a clothes 'maiden' in a room with trickle ventilated window and keep the door shut)

— use extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom when showering or boiling water and for 10 minutes after you stop bathing or cooking
— keep the home heated over 15 degrees.
— Open bedroom windows, first thing, for a blast of fresh air. Leave the trickle vents open to remove stale, moist air throughout the day.
— Keep the door to the kitchen and bathroom shut when cooking and bathing/showering.

Getting rid of mould

If you've had a condensation problem for a while then you might already have some mould growing.

This is also easy to sort yourself:

Wipe down affected walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash. These are readily available in most supermarkets and DIY shops.

Always follow the 'Safe Use' instructions when using fungicidal mould treatment

Also:

- dry clean or machine wash
- mildewed clothes
- shampoo mouldy carpets
- redecorate using fungicidal paint or if wallpapering use a fungicidal resistant paste

Remember the three things that cause condensation that you control:

1 – too much moisture
2 – not enough ventilation
3 – cold surfaces caused by not enough heating

Address all these and you will significantly reduce condensation in your home and stop mould from returning.

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