

Condensation and Damp Information Leaflet



Condensation and damp

What is it and how can we deal with it?

Condensation

Condensation is caused when moisture in the air makes contact with a cold surface, such as a wall and window, which produces water. The moisture remains in the air and on cold surfaces, unless it is removed by airing our homes and wiping the water away. Moisture is also naturally occurring in the air; when the air temperature falls, it is released as a water droplet.

Condensation becomes apparent on windows, as it “mists up” and runs down the panes of glass, and / or on surfaces, such as the window cill or the toilet cistern, as these are “wet”. Condensation can also form in areas where there is little movement and moisture is in the air, such as behind a cupboard or a chest of drawers that are against an external wall.

If nothing is done to tackle the condensation, window frames, walls and ceilings can have black mould start to form and grow. This can be treated by washing it down with water and a cleaning agent and by improving the air within our homes, especially in the kitchen and bathroom.

To avoid problems with condensation, we need to reduce the amount of moisture in the air, in our homes. The main causes of too much moisture are:

- Drying clothes on radiators and / or using unvented tumble driers
- Not opening windows enough when cooking, bathing or sleeping
- Furniture is directly against a wall, so the air cannot flow properly
- Blocking up trickle vents around window frames or blocking up air bricks (to attempt to keep our homes warm).

Did you know that...

- Drying clothes produces ten pints of water in an unvented tumble dryer
- Having a bath produces two pints of moisture
- Washing clothes produces one pint of moisture.

How to cut down the moisture in our homes

- Cover saucepans when cooking
- If possible, dry clothes outside or use a vented tumble drier (drying outside may also save you money)
- Wipe away condensation with a cloth when spotted

- Keep window trickle vents open and open windows when possible (particularly during / after cooking or showering)
- Ensure extractor fan works
- Turn on the cold tap of the bath first; then hot water does not produce as much steam
- Close doors in “wet areas” to stop the spread of moisture to other rooms
- Where possible position cupboards and drawers etc. against internal walls or ensure air can circulate behind furniture, which is against external walls
- Open bedroom windows for 5-10 minutes when we get up
- Some houseplants can naturally help to reduce moisture in your home.

Damp

Damp is caused when water from the outside gets into our homes. This can be through a window, a door or through the roof.

“Rising damp” occurs if the damp proof course or membrane within the walls or floors of your home is breached in some way. This is more common in ground floor flats or the ground floor of a house and usually takes a long time to show up.

Sometimes rain can seep through cracks in brickwork or through missing tiles on a roof. Blocked guttering with water spilling over, saturating external walls can also cause damp. It is often difficult to know the exact cause of any damp and often will need a specialist to tackle the issue and cause.

Damp, in the form of extreme condensation, can grow in different areas of our homes, on furniture and clothing; it also has a stale smell to it which can linger on clothes and in our homes.

Heating our homes

Trying to keep our homes properly heated, particularly with rising fuel costs, is difficult. It is tempting to put on an extra jumper and pair of socks to keep warm, rather than to turn on the heating so that we save money – but it usually helps to have a low background temperature of around 18 degrees in our home.

This temperature within our homes is considered adequate to keep people and homes safe, without being too cold to cause health concerns.

What to do if you have condensation or damp in your home

Please contact Sutton Housing Society to make us aware of the situation. We can arrange to visit you at your home, to look at the issue and to chat through with you the possible causes. We can also agree what actions to take to deal with the issue.

Contact us on **020 8642 1500** or email us at hello@shsoc.org.uk