

# Our guide to Damp and condensation

Damp can cause problems in your home. Our guide explains the different types of damp and what you can do about them.

When your home is damp, it can cause mould to grow on walls and furniture, or make timber windows rot. Mould and mites can be bad for your family's health.

Damp can be caused by:

- a leak or problem with the building, or
- condensation.

## Problems with the building

In general, if the damp leaves a tidemark effect, it is a problem with the building.

Penetrating damp can be caused by leaks from roofs, windows and plumbing. It dries once the leak is fixed and rarely leaves black mould.

Rising damp is extremely rare and is caused by water soaking up a wall by no more than one metre. It almost never causes black mould.

If the damp in your home could be either of these, you should ring Customer Services. We will send someone out to inspect the problem and arrange any necessary repairs.

## Condensation

If you can wipe off the damp or any mould, then your problem is condensation.

Condensation is dampness that occurs when water vapour in the air cools on contact with a cold surface. You will often find it:

- on or near windows
- on cold wall surfaces – especially if they are north facing
- in or behind cupboards or wardrobes – where there is little air movement, and
- it tends to get worse during cold weather.

If the damp in your home is caused by condensation, you need to take steps to stop it forming in the first place.

## How to minimise condensation

**Condensation is directly affected by how you use your home.** To limit condensation, you need to:

- produce less moisture
- keep rooms well aired (ventilated), and
- keep your home warm.



## Produce less moisture

You will need to be careful about ordinary daily activities that produce a lot of moisture.

You should:

- cover boiling pans and turn kettles off quickly
- avoid drying clothes on radiators, or in front of fires or heaters
- dry washing outdoors, or in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or the fan turned on
- if your tumble dryer isn't self-condensing, use a proper vent kit, and
- when running a bath, put in some cold water first.

## Keep rooms well aired

Keep damp air flowing out of your home and fresh air coming in.

You should:

- use any fans in your kitchen and bathroom, and leave them running after you leave the room (or open a window, if you have no fan)
- keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when you are using them
- keep a small window or trickle ventilator open in any room you are using
- keep curtains open for at least four or five hours each day, to let moisture escape through any window vents
- try to leave a gap between curtains and the wall during the day

## Our guide to damp and condensation 2

- don't completely draught-proof windows, especially in kitchens and bathrooms
- don't block air vents
- keep cupboards and wardrobes well aired and try not to overfill them, and
- where possible, line furniture up against internal walls.

### Keep your home warm

Keeping your home at a consistent temperature, means fewer cold surfaces for moisture to settle.

You should aim to:

- keep background heating on through the winter months and when you're not at home, and
- keep a small amount of heat and ventilation going at night, as we give off lots of moisture into the air while sleeping.

### Clearing moisture and mould

You will need to stay on top of any remaining moisture.

Do this by wiping any condensation from windows and elsewhere with a dry cloth every morning and open a window for a while – wring the cloth out in the sink, rather than drying it on a radiator

You should also wipe any small dots of black mould from walls and other surfaces with a mild bleach solution or anti-fungal spray to stop it spreading – you might need to do this at least twice a month in winter.

If mould gets onto fabrics, you can often wash them – but there may be a stain.



### Redecorating

If your home needs redecorating because of damp mould, be aware that this is your responsibility.

It is important to stop mould spreading as early as you can by cleaning with a mild bleach solution or an anti-fungal spray.

**For more information** send a message through your 'My Corner' account, or email [customerservices@thch.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@thch.org.uk)