



Marsden

Damp Services Ltd

Condensation in your home...

A guide to the causes and how to remedy the problem

Condensation is the most common form of unwanted dampness in buildings. It is water from the air that forms as condensation. It is a relatively new problem and is a reflection on our modern lifestyle. On a daily basis we generate large amounts of moisture within our properties via cooking, baths, showers, drying clothes on radiators and even breathing.

We have provided this guide to assist you in determining whether you have a condensation problem in your home, and provide some guidance as to how you may be able to reduce the problem. We would still recommend that you consider a survey from one of our specialist surveyors, however we hope this guide helps you get a better idea of the problem you may have in your home.



What are the signs of Condensation?

- ✓ Water on the inside of windows
- ✓ Water running down walls
- ✓ Black Spot Mould
- ✓ Fungal growths within wardrobes, on clothes or furniture
- ✓ Musty Smell (this is caused by the fungus that accompanies the condensation)
- ✓ Bedding feeling damp/cold
- ✓ Feeling like you have a cold when you get out of bed (this is your nasal passage being affected by black spot mould spores)
- ✓ Dampness/mould growths commonly found in corners, near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards

You are most likely to find mould on cold areas, and areas that lack ventilation. In the corner of a room, behind a bed/couch/wardrobe, in a wardrobe (sometimes on clothing), on external walls, where your ceiling meets the wall (due to loft insulation not always being right to the edge of the ceiling, leaving a cold spot around the perimeter of the room), and around windows/doors.

Mould Cleaning

Regular cleaning away of mould is vital. To remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a preparatory mouldicide or fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive number. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Spray containers of mouldicide can be obtained from chemists and DIY retailers.

Do not use bleach!

Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.

The most effective way to reduce mould is to reduce moisture.

Is condensation and mould bad for your health?

One of the most common questions we are asked is about health problems caused by mould. We have heard for years the evils of black spot mould and how dangerous it is.

All houses contain billions of mould spores. Virtually every human, in every location of earth inhales hundreds of thousands of mould spores on a daily basis. Contrary to common belief, there is currently no evidence that the presence of these moulds and the exposures to them threaten the health of members of the public.

In 2009, the World Health Organisation published its position paper on indoor moulds and air quality, which reinforced the findings of the 2004 Institute of Medicine mould study group. In that study, the IOM stated there was insufficient evidence to find a casual association between the presence of moulds and any of the claimed adverse health effects.

The WHO and the IOM, however, both concluded there was an association between damp living spaces and some adverse health effects. Therefore the problem is the moisture, and the poor air quality. The mould is just visual evidence of the problem. The WHO advise that the emphasis should be put on reducing moisture and increasing ventilation.

The most important thing is to reduce moisture levels in the property. There are several ways you can contribute to this yourself -

- ✓ Avoid drying laundry on a radiator or an airer. If you need to do this, try to ventilate the area. You could always put a small dehumidifier in a room with an airer, or put an airer in the bathroom with the door closed and an extractor fan on
- ✓ Keep bathroom/kitchen doors shut when the rooms are in use, and open a window to assist in ventilation, to stop the moisture reaching other rooms
- ✓ Make sure tumble driers are completely vented through an external wall or open window
- ✓ Keep lids on pans and use a good extractor if you have one
- ✓ If you have an extractor fan, make sure it is on whenever there is moisture in the air, in the kitchen and bathroom. Leave on for a significant time period after showers, baths and cooking to help clear out as much of the moisture as possible
- ✓ When filling the bath, run the cold water first then add the hot, it will reduce the steam which leads to condensation by up to 90%
- ✓ Where possible, put free standing furniture against internal walls (which are not as cold as external). The bigger the gap the better, so air can circulate around the room.
- ✓ Don't clutter. Don't over fill wardrobes and cupboards, as there will be a lack of ventilation. Don't pile items such as clothes.
- ✓ Provide moderate and constant heat in your home, which helps to avoid creating cold surfaces
- ✓ Avoid using bottled gas heaters (Calor etc.) as they produce about 8 pints of moisture from an average sized gas bottle



In some cases, reducing these measures may not be enough. It is then that we would recommend you consider mechanical extraction and ventilation...

In some buildings, there is not enough ventilation and/or extraction to prevent a condensation problem occurring. There are several options available to improve this.

Positive Input Ventilation Unit

The unit provides whole home ventilation. They are suitable for most properties with a loft space.

The unit ventilates the home from within, and provides constant air change to the property. We believe they are one of the most effective products available for tackling condensation issues. They are installed in the loft space, with a vent being visible below on the ceiling.



The units are best installed in a hallway. They are whisper quiet and there are several versions of the unit, including some with heat. We have a demo model in our office, if you would like to view it please call us and you would be welcome to come in.

While there are plenty of units on the market, the one we recommend is the Nu Aire Drimaster Heat, to the Envirovent PIV. We can provide a cost for supply and fit, please contact us for further details.

Extractor Fans

We always recommend that bathrooms and kitchens should have good quality extractor fans installed. They would also ideally be a model controlled by a humidistat. An electrician would be able to install these. We would recommend a Nu Aire or Ventaxia model, although there are many others on the market.

There may be extractor fans already installed, but if they are poor quality or are not used, then they will not help control the condensation problem. Existing fans may also require a service - blocked filters will significantly reduce the efficiency of a fan.

We would expect the cost for supply and fit of a good quality extractor fan to be around £250.

Dehumidifier

A dehumidifier is an excellent piece of equipment to tackle a condensation problem. They will take a lot of moisture out of the air. The problem with the units is that they rely on the user to empty them (usually daily) and they are a free standing unit, which requires turning on. If they are turned off, they will not provide any benefit to the property. We would recommend an Ebac model. They can advise on the correct size unit for your type of property.



We would expect the cost of a good dehumidifier for a 3 bedroom semi to be around £160 - £200.

One Way Vents

One Way Vents only allow air to escape the property, but not to enter. This provides ventilation without allowing cold air to enter a property.

These units are suitable for localised problems, such as in the corner of a room, in a build in wardrobe, or in an offshoot bedroom. Marsden Damp Services Ltd employ technicians who install these units, which are available at around £150 +VAT each, supply and fit.



Condensation Survey

The above is a guide and we do recommend that your problem should be diagnosed by a professional. All of our surveyors are CSRT qualified and have extensive experience in dealing with condensation.

We can carry out a survey on your property and provide a report, detailing the cause of the problem, and the recommended remedial measures, for a fee of around £200 +VAT (price varies on distance to property, please call for a quote). If your property is tenanted, the surveyor will also spend time with the tenants explaining the cause of the problem and how they can assist in reducing it.

Please call our office - 01914160600