



Controlling Condensation in Your Home

Helping you feel at home



This leaflet can be made available in larger print, in Braille, on audio CD or in an alternative language by calling **01376 535400**.



Polish

Broszura o zapobieganiu kondensacji w domu. Prosimy o kontakt pod numerem 01376 535400 w celu otrzymania tłumaczenia.



Russian

Брошюра “Предотвращение конденсации влаги в вашем доме”. Для перевода позвоните нам по номеру телефона 01376 535400.

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Introduction

It is important that your home is kept in good condition; helping you to feel comfortable and proud to live there. There are some things that you can do to maintain its condition, including controlling condensation levels.

Condensation in your home is caused by excess moisture, which can lead to mildew and mould growth if it's not managed. This leaflet offers help and advice on controlling condensation in your home and preventing mould build-up.

What is condensation? First steps to fight condensation

Even if you can't see it, there is moisture in the air. When air gets cold, it can't hold all the moisture produced by everyday activities. Some of the moisture appears as tiny droplets of water, most noticeable on the glass of windows or doors on a cold morning. This is condensation.

Condensation can also be seen on mirrors when you have a bath or shower, and on cold surfaces, such as tiles or floors. It is more likely to occur in cold weather, even when the weather is dry. However, it doesn't leave a 'tidemark'. This may have another cause, such as water leaking into your home from a plumbing fault, loose roof tiles or rising damp.

Looking for condensation

Condensation can appear on or near windows, in the corners of rooms, and in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It forms on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air.

Dampness caused by excessive condensation can lead to mould growth on walls and furniture, to mildew on clothes and other fabrics, and to wooden frames rotting.

There are simple things you can do straight away to help stop the build-up:

- » Make sure you dry your windows and windowsills every morning, as well as surfaces in the kitchen or bathroom that have become wet
- » Wring out clothes rather than drying them on a radiator
- » Don't cook with internal doors open, and put the extractor fan on and open a window
- » After cooking, leave the window securely open and leave the extractor fan running to allow moisture to escape. You can carefully clear the face of the extractor fan once it has been switched off with a duster or dry brush, to aid air flow
- » Don't allow food to boil in open pans
- » Ventilate your home by ensuring that trickle vents, where fitted, are open and clean
- » Lock windows open using multi-point locking mechanisms, where fitted
- » Keep bathroom doors closed and, after a bath, open the window to let the moisture escape.





Causes and prevention

There are four main factors that cause condensation:

1. Too much moisture being produced in your home
2. Not enough ventilation
3. Cold surfaces
4. The temperature of your home.

1. Too much moisture being produced in your home

Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes. Even our breathing adds some moisture - remember breathing on cold windows and mirrors to fog them up? Believe it or not, one person breathes out approximately one and a half pints of water in a 24-hour period.

Tips for reducing your moisture production:

- » Hang your washing outside to dry if possible, or hang it in the bathroom with the door closed and a window slightly open and/or the extractor fan on. Don't be tempted to put it on radiators or in front of a radiant heater
- » Always cook with pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water needed for cooking vegetables
- » Keep the kitchen door closed whilst cooking
- » When filling your bath, run the cold water first, then add the hot. This will reduce the steam, which leads to condensation
- » If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to the outside. Driers that simply blow the moisture through the door or directly into your home are

likely to produce condensation that could lead to mould problems. Consider the weight of the clothes before and then after drying. The weight difference is water, and that water is now in your home

- » Don't use your gas cooker to heat your kitchen, as it produces moisture when burning gas
- » Try to avoid using bottled gas heaters. They produce about eight pints of moisture from an average-sized gas cylinder.

2. Not enough ventilation

Ventilation is key to reducing condensation. It removes moist air from your home and replaces it with drier air from outside. Modern doors and windows seal buildings in order to retain heat. However this retains moisture too and has the effect of turning our homes into sealed boxes.

Moisture needs to be helped out of the building through active ventilation. You can help to reduce condensation that will build up overnight by leaving a window slightly open, or using trickle ventilators if fitted (remember your security). In the morning, when everyone is up and dressed, open the windows and close the doors of bedrooms. This ventilates the room and retains heat in the rest of your home.

The following will all help to prevent condensation:

- » Ventilate your kitchen when cooking, washing up or washing by hand. Open a window and, if you have one, use your cooker extractor hood

or extractor fan (they are cheap to run and very effective)

- » Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of your home. As long as the window is open, the moisture will leave
- » To reduce the risk of mildew on clothes and other stored items, never store damp items in confined spaces e.g. wet coats, boots etc. Allow damp items to dry in well ventilated areas before storing away. Only store fully dried clothes in wardrobes. To help air circulate around furniture, maintain a gap between furniture and the walls and, ideally, place furniture against internal walls.

Please note

Make sure accessible windows won't cause a security problem and remember to close them when you go out.

3. Cold surfaces

Condensation forms more easily on cold surfaces in your home e.g. walls and ceilings. Maintaining a consistent temperature of between 18 and 21 degrees allows for the fabric of the building to remain at a stable temperature. This, in turn, helps to prevent cold surfaces occurring, which is a contributing factor in the formation of condensation.

4. The temperature of your home

Warm air holds more moisture than cooler air. Cold air is more likely to deposit droplets of condensation round your home. The longer the air holds the moisture, the greater chance there is of it finding a way out of the building.

Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the unheated rooms. It is better to have a medium to low level of heat throughout your home. The best background temperature is considered to be 18 degrees, as this allows the air to retain the moisture.

When you want to turn the temperature up in your home, you only need to increase the heat for a short amount of time to raise the temperature. The temperature will also remain at a higher level for longer.

Controlling the temperature of your home:

- » Keeping the heating low all day in cold weather (rather than turning it off) will help to control condensation, but check your meters to monitor how much it is costing you. Different fuels cost different amounts at different times
- » If you don't have heating in every room, you could keep the doors of unheated rooms open to allow heat into them.

Storage areas/ brick-built sheds and outhouses

Some of our properties have enclosed storage areas. Some of these are

detached from the main part of the home and others are directly attached.

These areas are generally easy to identify, as they mainly have flat roofs and, most importantly, the brick or block walls are only 102.5 millimetres thick (approx. four inches). Where attached to the main part of your home, the door between will be an external door. Areas beyond that door will be treated as external/outside.

These areas are non-habitable; meaning that they are purely for storage and not for living in. They should be used as a shed and are maintained by us as such.

Tools, lawnmowers, ladders and bicycles are generally the type of items to be stored in these areas. Problems within the outhouse/store will be extensive if you have anything that produces heat e.g. fridges and tumble dryers. This is due to the construction not being suitably designed for the production of heat, which will increase condensation in these areas.

These areas are prone to mould growth and anything stored within them is prone to damage by moisture developing or mould growing upon them. Always keep the area ventilated to reduce this.

Tackling mould growth

It is best to treat the mould already in your home first, and then deal with the basic problem of the condensation to stop mould appearing. To kill and remove mould, you should wipe down or spray walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 'approval number' and ensure that you follow the instructions for its safe use.

These fungicidal washes are often available at local supermarkets. It is best to dampen the affected area first with a spray and then wipe with the fungicidal wash; this stops the spores becoming airborne when the cloth touches them.

Ideally, try to dry-clean your clothes and shampoo the carpets. Don't try to remove mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner. After treatment, you can redecorate using good-quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal resistant wallpaper paste to help prevent mould recurring.

Please remember the effect of fungicidal or anti-condensation paint is destroyed if covered with ordinary paint or wallpaper.

Please note

Mould is a symptom of condensation. The only way to permanently cure the mould is to reduce/eliminate condensation.

Rechargeable repairs

Under the terms of your tenancy you are responsible for keeping the inside of your home clean, in good repair and in good decorative order. This also includes dealing with condensation and mould growth on walls, windows or doors. We will discuss any recharges with you when you first contact us.

Useful contacts

Winter Fuel Payments Helpline:

Call: 0345 915 1515

Energy Efficiency Advice Centre:

Call: 0300 123 1234

Reporting issues to Greenfields

If you contact us about damp, mould or condensation in your home, we will do the following:

1. Advise you to read this leaflet and carry out relevant steps for four weeks
2. If there is no improvement, we ask you to contact us again
3. Our Customer Service Team will arrange for our Damp and Condensation Team to get in touch to arrange a visit to your home.

Give us your views

We aim to provide you with an efficient, professional and approachable service at all times. If you wish to give us feedback, or require any further information, please contact our Customer Service Team:

Email: csc@GreenfieldsCH.org.uk

Self Service Portal:

www.GreenfieldsCH.org.uk
(check your rent account, book a repair, make payments, send us messages and more, 24/7)

Text: 07860 024 511

Call: 01376 535400

Write to or visit:

Greenfields Community Housing,
Greenfields House, Charter Way,
Braintree, Essex, CM77 8FG

Customer Service Standards

Greenfields is committed to providing excellent customer services that meet the needs of everybody who contacts the association. The standards set out below are the minimum we will provide but we will aim to do better.

These are Greenfields' promises to you:



We will always:

- Listen to what you have to say
- Give our full name as part of our greeting
- Call back when we say we will
- Be helpful and polite
- Keep all residents updated with relevant information
- Offer appointments for all repairs and keep you updated if the appointment changes
- Provide a full response to complaints within 10 working days or within an alternative timescale agreed with you



When you contact our Customer Service Centre we will:

- Respond to Self Service messages within one working day of receipt
- Respond to Social Media contacts within four working hours
- Respond to Live chats within 60 secs
- Respond to your letter or email within five working days of receipt
- Answer telephone calls within 60 secs
- Offer a free of charge call back within 30 minutes or sooner
- Never charge to call you back



When you visit us we will:

- Provide easy access to our office building
- Have a private room available



When we visit you we will:

- Always show our identify badge with photo
- Always respect your home
- Keep to our appointment time or update you if we are going to be late



If you need help communicating we will:

- Make translation services available
- Make hearing loops available in our offices
- Make literature easy to read and available in braille, audio format and in large print on request

Notes





Email: csc@GreenfieldsCH.org.uk

Self Service Portal: www.GreenfieldsCH.org.uk
(check your rent account, book a repair, make payments, send us messages and more, 24/7)


Text: 07860 024 511

Call: 01376 535400

Write to or visit:

Greenfields Community Housing,
Greenfields House, Charter Way,
Braintree, Essex, CM77 8FG

www.GreenfieldsCH.org.uk

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-  @GreenfieldsCH
-  @Greenfieldsjobs

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REF: 04 Version: 1.1

