

Condensation, Damp & Mould

A Guide for Tenants

Dear tenants,

Please read this document carefully. If you have any questions or require further guidance, just get in touch with us.

We are approaching that time of year when the days are getting shorter and temperatures begin to fall. This can result in a higher chance of a property experiencing damp and mould, especially if it is not well managed.

The good news is that preventing damp and mould is much easier than you might think. **Making sure your home is free of mould and damp is your responsibility as a tenant.**

What is Condensation, Damp and Mould?

Condensation is when water vapour in the air comes in contact with cold surfaces, and condenses to become water. This will lead to these surfaces becoming damp.

Water vapour is already in the air, and increases just by us being present in a place and carrying out our normal activities.

The level of water vapour increases in different circumstances, such as when more people are around, when we cook, shower and dry clothes to name a few.

Mould growth is caused by persistent dampness.

Increased levels of water vapour, increase the risk of condensation, and subsequent mould growth.

In colder and wetter weather, condensation increases.

Condensation tends to happen in the coldest areas of rooms such as the external walls and windows.

It also happens where there is little air circulation e.g. behind wardrobes and beds,

especially when they are pushed up against an external wall.

You need to manage the moisture levels in your home to reduce the risk of mould growth. This is mainly by managing the ventilation and heating. Ventilation for short periods removes a lot of the moist air. Heating causes a lot of the water vapour to evaporate and not stay on the surfaces.

A combination of both is needed.

How to Reduce Condensation:

- **Ventilation:** Open your windows regularly in short periods of 10. It's especially important to do this when there is likely to be an increased level of moisture e.g. after waking up, after cooking or having a shower. Use extractor fans to disperse this moisture. You can minimise levels of moisture when cooking by putting lids on pots. Keep bathroom or kitchen doors closed when having a shower or bath, or when cooking. This will prevent moisture from spreading to other parts of the property. **Do not leave windows open for long periods as this will make the surfaces colder and cause more condensation.**
- **Turn Your Heating On:** Heating your home increases the temperature, therefore reducing condensation. It helps dry out damp, and reduce your chances of getting mould. We appreciate that energy prices have increased but **it is imperative that your property isn't left cold as this is one of the most likely reasons that result in damp and mould.** Try to maintain a constant temperature within your home by setting your thermostat to a comfortable temperature but over a longer period of time each day. We recommend that you set the thermostat to at least 18 degrees centigrade constantly.

This will help keep you home comfortable and is more energy efficient than switching the heating on and off at different times of the day. The boiler will come on for short periods at different intervals to top up the heat.

- **Drying Clothes:** Dry clothes in one of the following ways:-
 - Outside or in a room with a window open or extractor fan running and the doors closed
 - Use of a tumble dryer
 - Do not leave wet or damp clothes just lying around

Never put wet clothes on a radiator. They will fill the room with moisture very quickly.

- **Wiping Down Condensation:** Wipe down condensation from windows and other areas in the morning, with a dry cloth. Wring the cloth in the sink rather than drying it on a radiator.
- **Improve Air Movement:** It's important for fresh air to circulate to avoid mould forming where the air is still. **Make sure there is a gap between your furniture and the wall and give wardrobes and cupboards a good airing sometimes.** Clutter doesn't cause mould directly, but it reduces airflow which makes it easier for mould that enters your home to take hold.
- **Use of Dehumidifiers:** Using a dehumidifier is a great way to take the excess moisture out of the air. You can buy an inexpensive one from a local hardware store or online.

How to treat mould

If you already have mould on your walls or ceilings then you need to clean it off properly.

An effective two-stage method is:

1. Wipe the mould off with a dry cloth.
2. Spray the mould with anti-mould spray. The key ingredient in most anti-mould sprays is bleach. We find that spraying thin bleach tends to be very effective in killing mould. It is also not expensive to buy.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions and consider wearing a face mask when spraying the mould.

Be careful when using bleach or bleach-containing substances as it can damage fabrics and painted surfaces. Wear old clothes, eye protection and a mask.

Please note that we at Ashi Properties are here to help. If you have any questions relating to any of the above or are unsure or think there is an issue, please get in touch with us.

Helpful Resources

<https://www.cardiffdigs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/DampandMould.pdf>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_eExStpjoc

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63602501>

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