

# Damp and mould

## Potential causes

- ▶ Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows.
- ▶ Rain seeping through the roof, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- ▶ Rising damp due to a defective damp course or because there is no damp course.
- ▶ Defective brickwork.
- ▶ Water used during construction, if your home is still drying out.

Penetrating damp often leaves a 'tidemark'. If you believe your home has damp and it is due to one of the above causes, you should contact us via MyHastoe and have the necessary repairs carried out. It may take several weeks of ventilation to dry your home out, but using a dehumidifier will help.

## What is condensation?

If you do not think the damp comes from any of the above causes, it is probably caused by condensation.

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. If the air gets colder, it can't hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation – one of the main causes of damp. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over after you have a bath. Condensation is caused when high levels of humidity in the air meet cold surfaces such as windows, mirrors and walls. When moisture in the air meets these cold surfaces this turns into water.

Excessive condensation can lead to mould growth. Mould often appears around windows, in corners of rooms and behind furniture where there is less air circulation.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, usually from October to April, whether it is raining or dry. It does not leave a 'tidemark' and appears in places where there is little movement of air. Look for



black mould in corners of rooms, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It will often form on north-facing walls that don't get direct heat from the sun. Everybody generates moisture in their homes through

## How to prevent condensation and mould

normal daily activities such as cooking and bathing. The most effective way to prevent condensation is to increase ventilation, reduce moisture levels and to heat your home gently throughout the day instead of for brief periods.

## Increase ventilation

- ▶ Use an extractor fan and close the door when taking a bath or cooking.
- ▶ Open windows where possible and try to create cross ventilation by opening more than one window in your home.
- ▶ Leave space between furniture and walls to allow air circulations. Keep beds, mattresses, blankets, quilts and pillows away from external walls so that the air can circulate freely.
- ▶ Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes. Always make sure that some air can circulate freely by fitting ventilators in doors and leaving a space at the back of the shelves.

- Never block chimneys as it could be dangerous. If you are covering up a fireplace you must at least fit an air vent to allow ventilation.

## Reduce moisture in the air

- Dry clothes outside where possible. If you have to dry your washing indoors then it's best to place your washing on a clothes airer in the kitchen or bathroom, shut the door, turn on the radiator and run the extractor fan (if there is one provided) or open the window a little.
- Always remember to mop up any condensation or water as it forms on a daily basis.
- Do not dry clothes on radiators.
- If you have a tumble dryer which is not vented to the outside, you must install a vent directly to the outside. This should be done by a qualified technician.
- Keep lids on saucepans when cooking and don't allow to boil for longer than necessary.
- Always remember to put a small amount of cold water in the bath before you turn on the hot tap.
- Do not run your shower for longer than needed.

- Don't warm unheated bedrooms by leaving the door to a heated room open, this will cause warm, damp air to form condensation on cold surfaces.



## Heat your home

- You will get less condensation if you keep your home warm most of the time. It is preferable to keep a steady low level of heating throughout the day rather than heating your home from cold each time.
- Use the thermostats and/or thermostatic radiator valves (if fitted) to control your heating – this should also help to reduce your heating bills.
- Keep furniture and curtains away from radiators.
- Keep curtains open on sunny days.
- Keep doors open to rooms which get lots of sunlight to allow warm air to circulate.

## How to treat mould within your home

Firstly, treat the mould already in your home. To treat and remove the mould, wipe down the walls, ceiling, windows and door frames with a fungicidal wash in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Do not use bleach as this is water based and does not actually remove the mould.

The only way of avoiding severe mould is by eliminating the dampness, so if you deal with the basic problems of condensation, the mould should not reappear. To keep your home free from the effects of condensation you should make sure you have a good mix of heating and ventilation. If you have treated and tried to remove the mould but it keeps returning, please contact us online via MyHastoe.