

Is your home damp?

Most damp is caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, so reducing the risk of dampness and mould growth. The way you use your home affects the amount of condensation you get.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture content in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry, it does not leave a 'tidemark'.

It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in external corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. Damp houses encourages the growth of mould and mites and can increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Is it condensation?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also come from:

- 💧 Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- 💧 A roof leak
- 💧 Leaking gutters or rain water goods
- 💧 Water penetration around or through window frames
- 💧 Rising damp due to a defective or missing damp proof course (although this is usually due to other related repairs)
- 💧 Ground levels above damp course level, these causes of damp often leave a tide mark

If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, then it is probably condensation.

SOME WORDS OF WARNING

- ✗ Do not block permanent ventilators.
- ✗ Do not completely block chimneys.
- ✗ Do not draught proof rooms where there is condensation or mould.
- ✗ Do not draught proof rooms where there is a cooker or a gas fire.
- ✗ Do not draught proof windows in the bathroom or kitchen.

Produce less moisture

- ✓ Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.
- ✓ Avoid using paraffin and portable flueless bottled gas heaters as these heaters put a lot of moisture into the air.
- ✓ Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on.
- ✓ Vent any tumble dryer on the outside, unless it is the self condensing type. DIY kits are available for this.

Ventilate to remove moisture

- ✓ Keep a window open or trickle vents open when someone is in the room.
- ✓ Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening windows wider.
- ✓ Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan.
- ✓ Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too many things in them as this stops air circulating.

- ✓ Cut breather holes in the back of the wardrobes and leave space between the back of the wardrobe and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls but not too close as this could affect any air circulation in the room especially if there is inadequate heating or ventilation.

Insulate, draught proof and heat your home

When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely. Thurrock Council will insulate your property subject to meeting the Decent Homes criteria.

- ✓ In cold weather, keep low background heating on all day even when there is no one at home.
- ✓ Have your heating system checked to ensure it is working efficiently.

First steps against mould

- ✓ First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation mould should not reappear.

