

Managing damp and mould in the home



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homes

What is condensation?

Condensation is the moisture build up caused by everyday living and occurs when excess warm moisture in the air comes into contact with cooler air or a cold surface.

Everyday activities such as cooking, showering/bathing and drying clothes indoors can cause condensation. You can take some simple steps to reduce condensation, helping to prevent damp and mould.

There are three main ways to prevent the problem

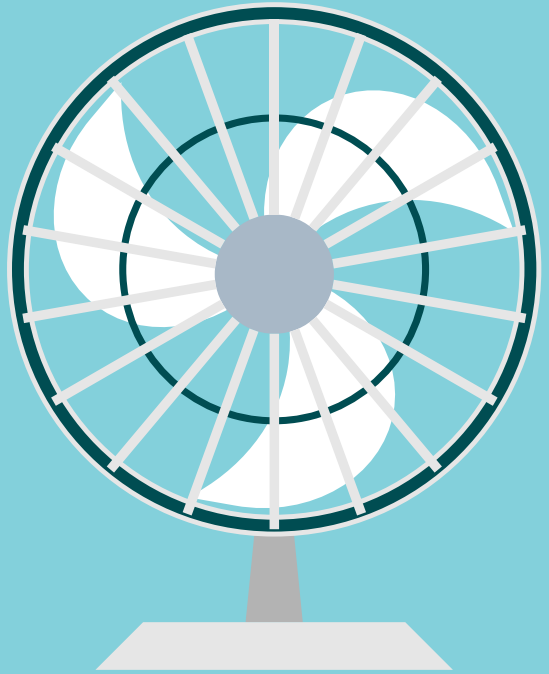
- **Stop moisture building up**
- **Ventilate/air your home**
- **Keep your home warm**



Stop moisture building up

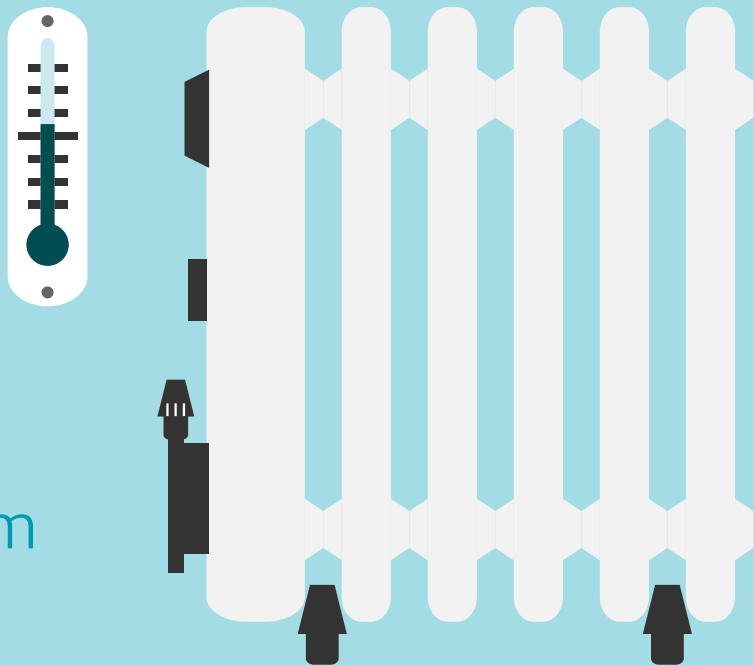
- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles.
- Cover boiling pans when cooking.
- When cooking, bathing or washing and drying clothes, close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms, even after you have finished.
- Cover fish tanks to stop the water evaporating into the air.
- Try not to dry clothes directly on radiators as this can produce extra moisture. It's better to dry clothes outside or on a clothes airer instead.
- Avoid using paraffin or portable gas heaters as these add moisture to the air.

Ventilate – or air – the home



- Open windows or vents for a while each day.
- When cooking or washing, open windows a small amount or leave extractor fans on as they help to remove moisture.
- It is important not to remove fuses from any extractor fans installed in your home.
- Where drying clothes inside is necessary, it's best to do so in a small room with windows open, doors closed and any extractor fans turned on.
- It is important not to block air vents as these are needed to ensure appliances work effectively and safely. Blocking air vents is likely to increase moisture and can increase the risk of carbon monoxide in the home.
- Allow air to circulate around furniture and in cupboards to avoid mould build up - you can do this by making sure cupboards and wardrobes aren't overfilled and there is space between the furniture and the wall.

Keep your home warm



- Draught proofing will keep your home warmer – and help reduce fuel bills. When the property is warmer, condensation is less likely to form.
- Maintain a low heat when the weather is cold or wet– this is more effective than short bursts of high heat.
- The recommended room temperature for heating your home is 18 degrees and 21 degrees for older residents, households with children under five and anyone with health conditions that make them vulnerable to the cold.
- It's important to avoid draught proofing rooms where there is condensation or mould growth; rooms where there is a gas cooker or a fuel-burning heater, for example a gas fire and windows in the bathroom or kitchen.
- If you don't have heating in every room then open doors to these rooms and let the air circulate.



We recognise the concerns people will have with their heating bills due to the cost of living - see '**Support available during the cost of living crisis**' information for advice and support available during these challenging times.

How to treat existing mould



Mould is a living organism and must be killed to remove it. To do this, wipe down affected areas with a specialist mould spray instead of using products like bleach or washing up liquid as they do not kill the mould effectively.

- Mould spray can be purchased from most supermarkets and hardware shops.
- When using any mould spray, follow the manufacturer's instructions and check that it carries a Health and Safety Executive approved number.
- Try to avoid disturbing mould by brushing or vacuuming because this can increase the risk of breathing problems.
- Treat any mould you may already have in your home then do what you can to reduce condensation. This will restrict new mould growth.
- Throw away any cloths you have used to clean the mould.
- Clothes that have mould growing on them should be dry cleaned and carpets with mould on them should be shampooed.

After treatment, if redecorating is needed, use a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. But don't paint or wallpaper over this paint as that makes it ineffective.

Other causes of damp

Damp in walls and ceilings can be caused by condensation. But there are other causes of damp, such as:

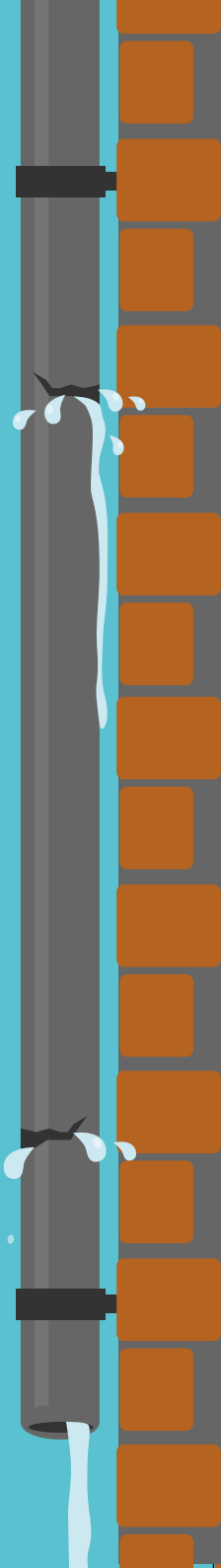
Leaking internal and external pipes

Rising damp - moisture from the ground into the walls of buildings which results in structural damage. This only appears at ground level and is usually seen by a damp patch above the skirting board.

Penetrating damp - is generally caused by a problem with the building, allowing rain water to penetrate through into the home. It can affect roofs, doors, ceilings and walls and unlike rising damp, can happen at any level.

Cold bridging - is where due to the design of the building there are specific cold spots created, for example a concrete floor extends out to an external concrete balcony.

If you suspect leaking to pipes, rising or penetrative damp, contact the repairs contact centre on: **020 8356 3691**



Support available during the cost of living crisis



Hackney energy advice line - for specialist advice call 0800 281 768 (Mon-Fri 9 am to 5 pm) or you can also use the London Fuel Switch energy switch calculator on www.energylinx.co.uk

The London Energy Saving Squad Ltd (LESS) - provide advice and information on damp, mould and condensation; ventilation; heating controls; and bill switching as well as energy saving top tips. Call their free line on **0800 915 3575**.

Hackney SHINE - set up to help residents keep well and warm throughout the year and avoid cold-related conditions during winter and anxiety over paying the fuel bills. Contact their advice line on **0800 281 768**. For more information see hackney.gov.uk/shine

Priority Services Registers - Vulnerable residents can sign up to these with their energy company to ensure they get priority help and support if there is an issue with their supply. More information can be found on the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) website www.ofgem.gov.uk/getting-extra-help-priority-services-register



More information on the financial support and help with energy and other household bills during the cost of living crisis can be found at bit.ly/HackneyCOL

 www.hackney.gov.uk