



western lettings

## Factsheet: Condensation & Damp

All houses can be affected by condensation and it can cause mould, leave a musty smell and damage clothes, furnishings and decoration. The advice below should help you prevent condensation before it becomes a problem and identify the differences between condensation and damp.

### What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when moisture in the air gets cooler and tiny water droplets appear on surfaces e.g. when your mirror mists over after you have a bath. It usually happens during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and places where there is little movement of air; for example in corners of rooms, on or near windows and in or behind furniture. If left untreated black mould will begin to grow.

### What causes condensation?

There are three main causes of condensation in a house:

1. Rooms that are too cold and inadequately heated, creating lots of cold surfaces.
2. The production of too much moisture from cooking, washing, showering, clothes drying etc. – all result in moisture laden warm air which will lead to condensation in the coldest parts of the house.
3. Inadequate ventilation of the steam produced at source, which keeps it all in the sealed envelope of the house. Houses with double glazing and no open chimneys are effectively hermetically sealed boxes, with little or no ventilation to remove excess moisture when it is produced. Through the daily routine of showers, baths, boiling kettles, cooking, drying clothes and breathing a person will produce approximately 4 pints of water per day and ventilation is needed to remove this from the home.

### How to prevent condensation

By following the simple steps below you can considerably reduce condensation by producing less moisture and keeping your home well ventilated and heated.

1. Maintain a minimum temperature in all your rooms, especially bedrooms and bathrooms – temperatures should not be allowed to fall below about 18°C. If you are out all day leave some heating on to keep the house warm.
2. Minimise the amount of steam you produce when cooking and washing and always vent this to the outside, for example by opening a window or using the extractor fan if you have one. Always confine steam to the room it is produced in by keeping internal doors closed.