

Everything you need to know about Damp, Mould and Condensation.

As the weather turns colder, condensation and mould can form more easily. We receive a significant number of reports of mould from October to March.

There are lots of reasons for damp, mould and moisture in the home. In these winter months, condensation is often a big cause of mould on walls and ceilings, which can be reduced or even stopped completely by simple lifestyle changes.






Condensation There are three main causes of condensation:

- Moisture produced by everyday activities.
- Not enough ventilation
- Cool temperatures

Cooking, drying clothes – even breathing – add to the moisture in the air. If this moisture is allowed to build up it can cause damp. This can increase the risk of respiratory illness and cause black mould growth on walls, ceilings, furniture and clothing.

Some people do not realise that this mould growth is often caused by condensation from normal activities, mistakenly thinking that these are signs of damp caused by the property itself. This leaflet gives helpful advice on how to treat condensation in the home.

How much moisture can be produced in your home in a day?

Two people active for one day		3 Pints
Cooking and boiling a kettle		6 Pints
Having a bath or shower		2 Pints
Washing clothes		1 Pint
Drying clothes		9 Pints
Total amount of moisture produced in one day		24 Pints

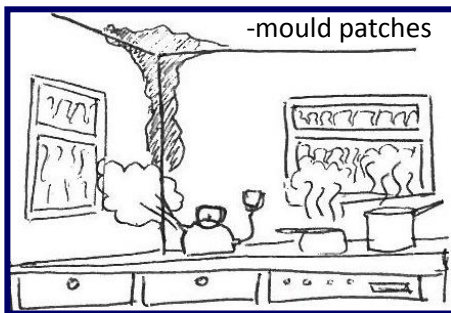
What can I do to reduce condensation in my home?

There are three main ways to tackle the problem

- Stop moisture building up
- Ventilate, or air, the home
- Keep your home warm

Stop moisture building up:

- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles.
- Cover pans when cooking.
- When cooking, bathing or drying clothes, close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms, even when you have finished.
- Cover fish tanks to stop water evaporating into the air.
- Dry clothes outside where possible
- Make sure tumble dryers are vented outside
- When running a bath, run cold water first, then hot, this will reduce condensation by 90%



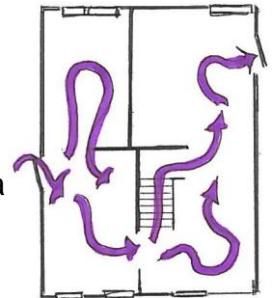
Ventilate, or air, the home

- When cooking or washing, open windows and/or use extractor fans (call repairs straight away if you do not have extractor fans and we can arrange a visit)
- Where drying clothes inside is necessary, do so in a small room with windows open.
- Ensure trickle vents in windows are always open.

- Do not block air vents – this is also important where gas and heating appliances are concerned as they need a supply of oxygen
- Allow air to circulate around furniture and in cupboards – you can do this by making sure cupboards and wardrobes aren't overfilled and that there is space between furniture and the wall.
- Try '**cross-ventilation**' for 30minutes daily. This is opening a downstairs window to the first notch, and a window at the opposite side of the home, upstairs if there is a second floor. This will allow drier air to circulate through the home. Important: consider security when opening windows. Close before going out



Tip: To get the best effect from cross ventilation, open the window that is receiving the breeze a little less than the one on the opposite wall. This will produce a vacuum effect.



Keep your home warm

- Draught proofing will keep your home warmer – and help reduce fuel bills. When the whole house is warmer, condensation is less likely to form.
- Keeping the heating on at low all day will help to control condensation. It is more economical than having the heating on full blast for several short bursts throughout the day.
- Draught proof your home, such as under doors, and close curtains at night

What can I do if I already have mould in my home?

The tips above should help prevent mould, but what if you already have the problem? How do you get rid of it?

- Do not disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning. This can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- Mould is a living organism and needs killing to get rid of. To do this, wipe down the affected areas with a fungicidal wash – one which carries a Health and Safety Executive approved number – making sure you follow the instructions. **Do not use bleach or washing up liquid**
- Treat any mould you may already have in your home, and then do what you can to reduce condensation. This will restrict new mould growth.
- Mildewed clothes should be dry cleaned, and any affected carpets shampooed.
- After treatment, redecorate using good quality anti-fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. **This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper**

I have followed all the advice in this leaflet, what do I do next?

If you have followed the advice given in this leaflet, then you should begin to notice a considerable improvement within a few weeks (around four to six weeks). If the problem persists, it may be due to another cause of damp. There are four main causes of damp:

- **Condensation** – as discussed in this leaflet
- **Rising damp** – This is rare as a damp proof course prevents this, but can usually be seen by a tide mark above the skirting board.
- **Penetrating Damp** – caused by a problem with the fabric of the building which means rainwater is able to get through the walls, roof windows or doors.

Possible rising damp or penetrating damp



Possible penetrating damp



- **Plumbing faults or broken leaking pipes**

Rising damp and penetrating damp can usually be easily identified at the early stages. A leaking pipe can be more difficult to identify, and if you suspect you may have a leaking pipe then this should be reported to the repairs team on

01884 255255 or
repairs@middevon.gov.uk

Reporting repairs and requesting inspections

If you have followed all of the advice in this leaflet, and you are certain that the mould is not caused by condensation, you will need to contact Customer Services to report the issues that you are experiencing.

It is very likely that the Advisor or Technical Support Officer will ask you several questions, in order to ensure that this issue is resolved as quickly and efficiently as possible.

If you have the answers to these questions ready, this will help with the repair process:

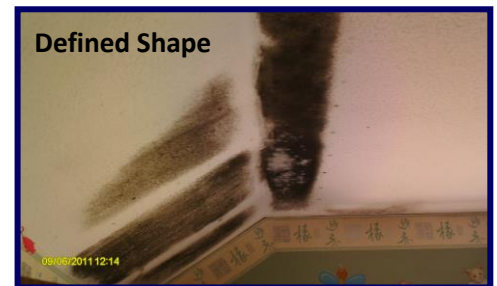
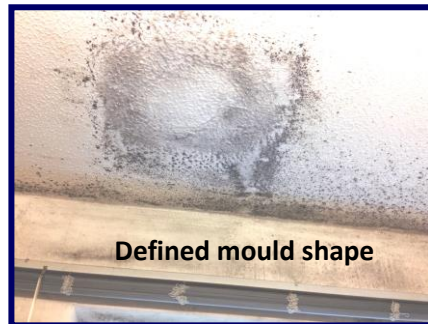
- Have you called about damp before, and have you received a mould pack?
- Which rooms are affected by the damp?
- If there is mould, is it black, white or another colour?
- Do you have extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom? If so, are they working? (Tip: a fully working extractor fan should be able to hold a piece of A4 paper to it when turned on)
- If you have trickle vents fitted to windows, are they open?



- Do you live in a flat, bungalow or house?
- Is the damp affecting outside walls only, as opposed to interior partition walls?
- What is above the damp on the ceiling? i.e. loft, another room, another flat?
- Are you able to check the loft space for insulation?



- Is the mould is a particular pattern, or does it simply spread from a corner or edge of a room? Is the mould forming is a defined shape, such as with straight edges, or circular (see pictures for examples of defined shapes).



- **For further advice, please call the Customer First team**

Please call and speak to repairs if:

- The damp is not related to condensation
- You have followed all of the guidance and still have damp and mould issues

We can then arrange for an inspector to visit and resolve the issues for you.

Contact us on 01884 255255 or free-phone 0800 023002 or email repairs@middevon.gov.uk