

## CONDENSATION ADVICE FOR TENANTS

During the cooler months, Premier Properties Perth receives an increase in the number of tenants reporting what they perceive to be penetrating/rising damp caused by a fault in the structure of the building. In the vast majority of cases, the mould/odor which the tenant is experiencing is caused by condensation produced in the home through everyday living. We have produced this advice sheet to help tenants prevent and treat condensation by properly ventilating their homes and taking the steps outlined on the second page.

### How is condensation caused?

The moisture in the air comes from a number of sources within the house. Water vapour is produced in relatively large quantities from normal day to day activities such as:

- Breathing (including pets)
- Steam from cooking food in the kitchen
- Steam from personal washing, bathing and showering
- Washing and drying clothes indoors and on radiators
- Heating - especially paraffin and flueless gas
- Insufficient ventilation within the property

### What is Condensation?

Condensation is simply the moisture caused by everyday living. It is now a common issue in properties and is a direct result of changes in modern living conditions.

In many properties, traditional open fires have been replaced by central heating systems and double glazing has been installed. These modern aids to home comfort have created rooms which are warmer but often have less ventilation and fewer air changes.

Moisture is absorbed into the warm atmosphere of your house and when the house cools down the moisture condenses on cool surfaces.

### How to identify condensation

The common sign of condensation is water collecting on the inside of windows or on the window sill. It is generally noticeable where it forms on non-absorbent surfaces, i.e. windows or tiles, but it can form on any surface and it may not be noticed until black mould growth, rotting of material, peeling of decorations or damage to clothes occurs. This is also normally coupled with a strong musty smell.



## 10 Steps to Reduce Condensation in your Home

1. Keep your property well ventilated by opening some windows for a while on a daily basis to allow moist air to escape.
2. During the winter and at other cold times throughout the year you should try to maintain a constant temperature in your home.
3. When you are cooking always turn the extractor fans on in the kitchen on a high power to allow them to extract any excess moisture from pots and pans. If possible, open up windows for extra extraction. It is an idea to leave the extractor fan on for longer than you are cooking as there will be excess moisture in the air which you cannot see. Close the kitchen door to prevent steam from going into cooler rooms.
4. Always keep the lids on pots and pans whilst cooking so that the moisture does not escape from the pans. If the lids are off moisture will be rising from the pans even if you cannot see it.
5. After taking a bath or shower there will be excess moisture in the air. To stop condensation forming the windows should be opened and extractor fans turned on. Close the bathroom door to prevent steam from going into cooler rooms.
6. When you are drying your clothes if possible you should dry them outside. If you cannot do this then put them in an enclosed room and keep the window open.
7. You should leave a small gap between the outside walls and furniture as this allows the air to move away from the bottom of the walls and circulate around the furniture and the room.
8. Your property's airways such as airbricks, vents and chimneys should be clear to allow airflow in and out of your home.
9. Check your roof to see if there are any problems such as water leaking in.
10. Check the guttering and down pipes, make sure that they are carrying the water away and that there are no damaged/blocked guttering or drainpipes causing the external wall to become soaking wet.

### Heating vs. Ventilation

It is unlikely that a home in the UK will never need preventive measures or a form of condensation treatment as most of us do not want to keep our windows open, particularly when it is cold outside. However, it is important to get the right balance between heating and ventilation. When you open your windows it may seem that you are losing heat and allowing cool air to enter your home. However, this actually lets moisture laden air out and dry air in.

**Dry air is cheaper to heat than moist air so it evens out.**

### First steps against mould:

- Treat any mould you may already have in your home then do what you can to reduce condensation. This will restrict new mould growth.
- Do not disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning. This can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- Wipe off mould growth immediately with water. Do not use washing up liquid.
- Dry-clean clothes affected by mildew and shampoo carpets.
- To kill and remove mould growth, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash. This is available from a hardware or DIY store or supermarket. You should choose a product which carries a Health & Safety Executive 'approval number'. Always follow the instructions carefully. Do not use bleach.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

**If you have tried the above condensation tips and suspect your property may require further condensation checks, please contact the office on tel: 01738 442255.**