

Condensation & dampness

How is condensation dampness caused?

There is always moisture in the air, but normally you cannot see it. When the air gets too full of moisture or when it gets cold, condensation will form on windows, walls and even bedding and furnishings.

Moisture will 'seek out' cold places to go, so warm humid air produced from cooking, washing clothes and bathing will go to areas like under heated bedrooms, window panes and cold walls.

Condensation occurs most often in the Winter, whether it is dry or raining outside.

Why is condensation such a problem?

Condensation dampness can lead to problems of rotting windows, peeling wallpaper and mouldy walls, carpets or clothes.

As well as problems with the 'fabric' of a building, the conditions in which condensation thrives can cause health problems for inhabitants.



Is it condensation or dampness?

Dampness is caused by unwanted water being in the building. It can be caused in many ways, such as:

- faulty or no damp proof courses (common in old properties);
- defects in the building letting in the rain (e.g. damaged roofs);
- leaking pipes, wastes or overflows;
- condensation of moisture in the air;

- the drying out of new or modernised homes



Historically, people argued whether problems were dampness or condensation. It is, however, more accurate to say condensation can result in dampness.

Condensation dampness does not leave a 'tidemark' and it appears in places where there is little movement in the air in corners, behind furniture, in cupboards, etc.

What can you do to cut down condensation problems?

It is mainly up to you to solve the problems of condensation dampness and the following advice will help:

Produce less moisture by:

- Covering pans when cooking;
- Drying clothes outdoors;
- Venting tumble-dryers to the outside;
- Don't use paraffin or bottled gas heaters (they produce a LOT of moisture).

Ventilate to reduce moisture:

- Ventilate rooms that people use regularly (especially bedrooms);
- Increase ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens when cooking or bathing (close the doors of these rooms to stop moisture getting to the rest of your home);
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes to stop moisture forming on clothing

Heat your home a little more:

- Keep temperatures in all of the rooms of your home above 15°C. This will help to cut down the risk of condensation forming on clothes and walls (it is still likely to form on windows though).

Cut down on drafts:

fi All Prospect's homes are well insulated and should be relatively draft free. If, however, you are experiencing drafts mention this to the maintenance staff.

fi Do not block any permanent vents fitted in your home, these are required to provide fresh air for gas appliances, etc.

Dealing with mould?

Condensation dampness may result in mould appearing in your home.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe

mould is to eliminate the condensation. If this is done and the mould is treated it should not reappear.

To kill and remove mould, wipe down the areas with a fungicidal wash, following the manufacturers instructions.

Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing can increase the risk of respiratory problems.

After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to prevent mould recurring. Note that this paint is not effective if covered by ordinary paints or wallpaper.

Prospect Community
Housing
6 Westburn Avenue,
Wester Hailes,
Edinburgh
EH14 2TH

tel: 458 5480

fax: 453 2868

email: enquiries@prospectch.org.uk