

How to control condensation in your home



What is condensation?

When warm moist air produced by ordinary household activities such as cooking and bathing hits a cold surface, (e.g. a cold wall or a window) condensation occurs. Unless the moist air can escape to the outside through an open window, air vent or extractor fan, it will always stay in your home moving around until it finds a cold spot where it can condense.

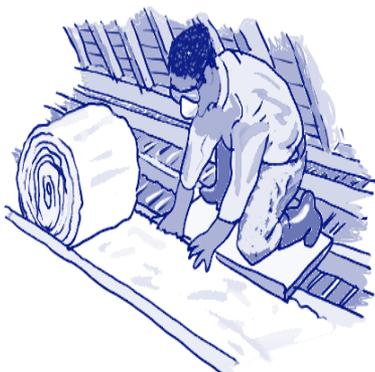


Condensation can lead to mould growth which can contribute to problems of asthma and other respiratory diseases. A recent study in Glasgow has proved that Asthma attacks are directly triggered by allergens in the dust mite's faeces. Most homes have dust mites. Dust mites thrive in conditions where the relative humidity of the air is high, so they flourish in the winter months. If a member of your household suffers from asthma it is very important to keep the home warm and well-ventilated and to steam clean mattresses, bedding and carpets before the onset of winter to control the dust mite population.



Insulation

- Condensation occurs on cold spots, so if you can warm up the cold spots you will help to control condensation.
- Insulating your loft, external walls, and draught proofing doors and windows will reduce the cold spots and make your



house more comfortable cheaper to heat.

- Find out if you are eligible for a grant for insulation from our leaflet 'Energy Efficiency Grants and Offers for Households'.

Heating

- Try and avoid cold areas in the home. It is better to heat the whole home to a lower temperature rather than one room to a very high temperature. When you get condensation and mould forming, it is often not in the room where you are making the moisture, e.g. the kitchen, but in a room you don't often use like the spare bedroom. This may be because this room is not usually heated. Try heating all the rooms regularly.
- Make sure you are using the heating system and controls efficiently as this will save you money and enable you to afford to heat more of your home.

Reducing moisture

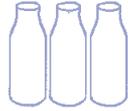
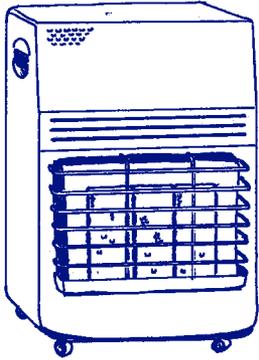
Reducing moisture in the home will cut down the amount of condensation. How much moisture do you make in your home?

Drying clothes produces 10 pints (6lbs of spun washing in an unvented tumble dryer)

Washing clothes produces 1

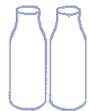


- If you use a tumble dryer make sure it is vented to the outside.
- Don't dry clothes indoors if possible. If you have to, open the window and shut the door of the room where the clothes are drying as this will let the moisture from the wet clothes go outside rather than circulate around your home.



Using a paraffin or bottled gas heater for 5 hours produces 3 pints of moisture

- Avoid using portable gas and paraffin heaters. These fuels give off a lot of moisture when they burn so open a window in the room where the heater is if you have to use one. Using LPG heaters is prohibited in LBTH homes for health & safety reasons.
- They are expensive to run - they cost about 7- 9p per hour to use, compared to a mains gas fire which costs 2 - 3p per hour.



Having a bath produces 2 pints of moisture

- Use an extractor fan in the bathroom if you have one when you have a bath or shower to let the moisture out.
- Keep the bathroom door

shut when in use to stop moisture moving around your home

- Try putting cold water in the bath before adding hot – no steam is created this way!
- If you have a combination boiler, experiment with the water thermostat at the boiler to get it to a useable temperature without the need to add cold water.
- Leave the windows slightly open for half an hour after bathing to get rid of the moisture. Remember to shut them afterwards!

Cooking by gas for 3 hours produces 3 pints of moisture



- Use the extractor fan or open the window in the kitchen when cooking to let the moisture out.
- Cover boiling pans with pan lids - this will save on your fuel bills as well as reducing moisture.
- Close the kitchen door when cooking as this stops the moisture moving around your home
- If you have trickle vents above the windows, keep them open and don't block up any air vents
- If you can fit a Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) fan it will be easier to ventilate properly without causing heat loss. Speak to your Energy Advisor if you want more information about MVHR

