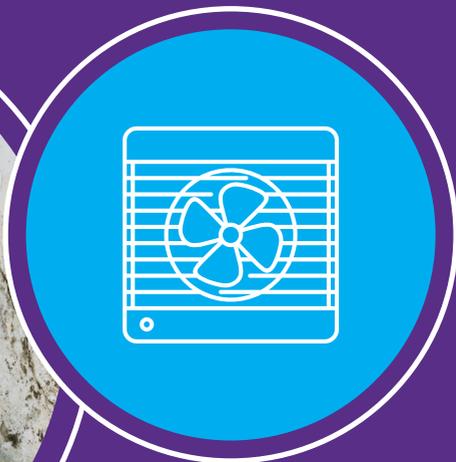


A GUIDE TO REDUCING CONDENSATION, DAMP AND MOULD IN YOUR HOME





About damp, mould and condensation

What is damp and what causes it?

Damp is caused by too much moisture in a room. There's always moisture in the air, but normally you cannot see it. When there's too much it can cause damp and mould to form and spread and this can be a problem in homes for a variety of reasons.

If you notice damp, mould or water marks in your home it may also be caused by an issue with the building, such as a leaking pipe or roof, or damaged guttering.

Over time, it can affect your health, so it's important to treat it and stop it spreading. If you spot signs of it in your home, contact the Housing Repair centre on 01506 280000 as soon as possible.

MAIN CAUSES OF DAMP

- Leaking pipes and roofs
- Rainwater getting into your home
- Damaged or blocked drains and guttering
- Rising damp
- Damaged outside walls
- Condensation
- Poorly installed decking or garden items against walls



Letting your home breathe

When moisture in the air comes into contact with cold surfaces, such as windows and walls, it can cause condensation.

This is completely normal and most likely to happen in colder rooms. However, if the moisture builds up and is not able to escape the room, then it can become a major problem.

Causes of condensation

- Producing a lot of moisture for example steam in kitchens and bathrooms
- Insufficient ventilation so moist air cannot escape
- Not enough heating

When is condensation a problem?

- When it builds up on a surface it can cause damp to form and mould to grow
- The most common places for it to happen are on walls (especially in corners and behind furniture), ceilings, window frames and sills
- It can also affect clothes, curtains, bedding, wardrobes and furniture and if it's left untreated, it can cause severe damp, which could be harmful to you and your family's health

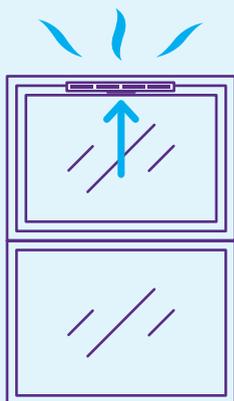


Scan the QR code for more advice on condensation.

TOP TIPS

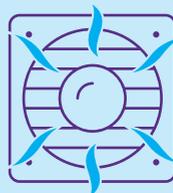
USE WINDOW VENTS

They allow moisture to escape without making the room cold.



USE EXTRACTOR FANS

If you have one in your kitchen or bathroom use it when cooking, bathing or doing laundry.



COVER PANS WITH LIDS WHEN COOKING

This prevents the steam escaping.



DO NOT DRY CLOTHES ON RADIATORS

Dry them outside if you can or on a drying rack.

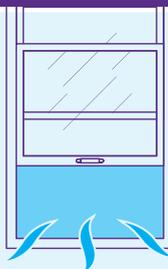
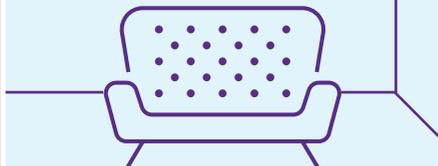


OPEN WINDOWS AND SHUT THE DOORS

in rooms where you're cooking, bathing or drying clothes (dry clothes outside if you can).

LEAVE GAPS

between furniture and the walls so air can circulate.

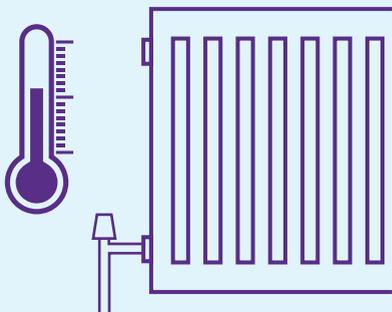


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AIR ROOMS BY OPENING WINDOWS

aim for at least ten minutes a day before turning the heating on.

HEAT ROOMS ABOVE 15°C IF YOU CAN



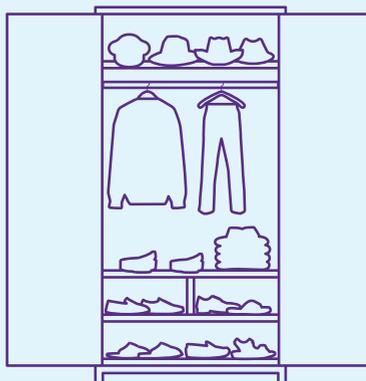
VENT TUMBLE DRYERS TO THE OUTSIDE

If possible or buy a DIY 'self-condensing' dryer kit.



AIR ROOMS, CUPBOARDS AND WARDROBES REGULARLY

Avoid putting too much in cupboards and wardrobes as it stops air circulating.





Extractor fans

What is damp and what causes it?

If you have an extractor fan, it's really important that you use it properly. They're very cheap to run (typically less than 1p an hour).

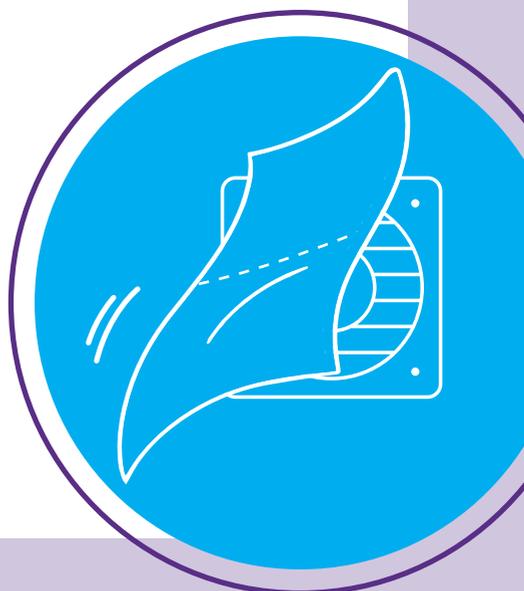
When bathing or cooking, switch on the fan as soon as you start (some start automatically). Then close the door behind you.

The fan will draw moisture from the room. Some fans are designed to be constantly running and should not be disconnected.

Check it

If you have an extractor fan in your kitchen or bathroom do this quick test to check it's working properly.

- 1 Turn the fan on
- 2 Place a sheet of toilet paper on the front of the fan
- 3 If the paper sticks to the front of the fan when you remove your hand the fan is working, if the paper falls to the floor, then it's not working effectively
- 4 If it's not working, get in touch and we'll fix it



It can sometimes be hard to keep our homes warm and we can make damp and mould issues worse when trying to fix heat and air flow problems.

Avoid

- ⊗ Sealing up rooms that already have a condensation or mould problem
- ⊗ Adding extra sealant to windows in kitchens and bathrooms without small vents or extractor fans
- ⊗ Blocking up air bricks in walls or little vents in windows. These help your home breathe

Did you know?

Everyday activities create moisture inside homes. Pets can also contribute to moisture in the air, as large dogs can give off more moisture than an average adult. Fish tanks are another factor that can contribute to increased levels of moisture. **Here are some examples of how much moisture could be produced in one day.**

Pints of condensation generated by household activities

Two people at home for 16 hours



Drying clothes indoors



Cooking and using a kettle



Washing dishes



Taking a bath or shower



How West Lothian Council Can Help You?

West Lothian Council will deal with damp or mould caused by structural or repair problems, including:

- Leaks in the roof
- Cracks or holes in walls
- Rotting window or door frames
- Lack of ventilation or poor ventilation in your home
- Water coming into your home from the ground

West Lothian Council will;

- Deal with damp and mould in a reasonable amount of time
- Carry out a dampness inspection to determine any actions required, and explain the results
- Provide expert guidance on condensation and how this can be managed
- Review existing ventilation within the property and the potential installation of extractor fans in kitchen and bathroom or ventilation systems dependant on property needs
- Organise any repairs, including fixing emergency issues like leaks
- Help you to find the right advice on heating, ventilation, and condensation as well as energy efficiency measures including loft and cavity wall insulation through an energy advice referral
- Provide a Hygrometer to support you in managing the temperature and humidity level within the property. This will allow you to track and understand

how changes can assist in managing condensation. At inspection you will be advised how to use and get the best out of the device

- Surveying of existing radiator sizes to ensure these are sufficient for the room dimensions
- In certain cases we may install insulated plasterboard to rooms or paint areas with thermal paint, which may be prone to high condensation levels and low room temperatures
- Provide an outcome letter for every inspection, with a detailed explanation of our findings and any remedial work required

Your responsibilities

Check for signs of damp and mould.

These can be:

- A damp and musty smell
- Mould or mildew on walls, floors or ceilings
- Walls, floors or ceilings that feel cold or damp
- Dark or discoloured patches on walls or plaster
- Lifting or peeling wallpaper
- Excessive condensation on windows

Condensation in Your Home

If mould grows you can remove it easily by wiping down walls with a fungicidal wash which is available to buy in any supermarket. If you deal with mould quickly, it shouldn't come back.

If you are struggling to heat your home due to energy costs or are worried about debt, contact the Advice Shop for advice and support on 01506 283 000 or visit www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop for more information and ways to get in touch. Please scan the QR code to request a repair.

