

A personal approach to professional property services.

CARING FOR YOUR HOME FACTSHEET

Winter hints and tips

Cold weather can damage homes and belongings but you can help prevent this by following a few simple tips:

- If you have a loft, leave the door open slightly to allow heat into the roof space
- Keep your property warm at all times by keeping the heating on a low temperature, this will minimise the risk of your water pipes freezing or causing them to burst.
- Ensure you know the location of your stopcock in case you need to turn off the mains water supply.
- Turn off water supplies to any outside taps or outbuildings.
- If you are going away over the winter period please inform the office and also ensure your property is left well heated and ventilated.
- Ensure your paths/walkways are kept clear of ice/snow to prevent accidents.

Keep your Home free from Damp and Mould

All houses can be affected by condensation and it can cause mould, leave a musty smell and damage clothes, furnishings and decoration. The advice below should help you prevent condensation before it becomes a problem and identify the differences between condensation and damp.

What is condensation?

Condensation occurs when moisture in the air gets cooler and tiny water droplets appear on surfaces e.g. when your mirror mists over after you have a bath. It usually happens during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and places where there is little movement of air; for example in corners of rooms, on or near windows and in or behind furniture. If left untreated black mould will begin to grow.

What causes condensation?

There are three main causes of condensation in a house:

1. Rooms that are too cold and inadequately heated, creating lots of cold surfaces.
2. The production of too much moisture from cooking, washing, showering, clothes drying etc. – all result in moisture laden warm air which will lead to condensation in the coldest parts of the house.
3. Inadequate ventilation of the steam produced at source, which keeps it all in the sealed envelope of the house. Houses with double glazing and no open chimneys are effectively hermetically sealed boxes, with little or no ventilation to remove excess moisture when it is produced. Through the daily routine of showers, baths, boiling kettles, cooking, drying clothes and breathing a person will produce approximately 4 pints of water per day and ventilation is needed to remove this from the home.

How to prevent condensation

By following the simple steps below you can considerably reduce condensation by producing less moisture and keeping your home well ventilated and heated.

1. Maintain a minimum temperature in all your rooms, especially bedrooms and bathrooms – temperatures should not be allowed to fall below about 18°C. If you are out all day leave some heating on to keep the house warm.
 2. Minimise the amount of steam you produce when cooking and washing and always vent this to the outside, for example by opening a window or using the extractor fan if you have one. Always confine steam to the room it is produced in by keeping internal doors closed.
 3. Keep the bathroom door closed during and after bathing. Open the window (or use the extractor fan if you have one) straight after bathing, in order to get rid of the moisture.
 4. Dry clothes outside, or in a room with the window open and the door shut. Vent tumble driers outside if they're not condenser versions.
 5. Keep all rooms ventilated by slightly opening windows and keeping doors shut, particularly when the room is in use. Double glazed units often have trickle vents fitted which should be left open. This helps release any moisture and prevents it spreading around your home.
 6. Don't block airbricks or window vents.
 7. When going to bed, close the bedroom door and keep a small window ajar or when getting up, open the window and keep the door closed for a couple of hours to get rid of the moisture produced overnight.
 8. Wardrobes and other large items of furniture should not be placed directly against external walls. Pockets of trapped air can lead to serious surface condensation and mould growth on the walls and furniture. Leave space between the back of the furniture and the wall. Leave wardrobe doors open slightly. Put floor-mounted furniture on blocks to allow air to circulate underneath.
 9. Open a window and shut the doors of any rooms affected by condensation.
- Left untreated nuisance condensation can cause mould to grow. If this happens you must remove mould by washing the surfaces affected with a fungicidal mould remover, following the manufacturer's instructions.

What is damp?

Damp is different from condensation. Damp occurs when a fault in the building's structure lets in water from outside. There are two main types of damp.

1. Penetrating damp - this occurs if water is coming in through the walls or roof (for example, under a loose roof tile) or through cracks.
2. Rising damp - this occurs if there is a problem with the damp proof course. This is a barrier built into floors and walls to stop moisture rising through the house from the ground. The usual evidence of rising damp is a 'tide mark' on the walls that shows how high it has risen and sometimes an accompanying musty smell.

No Smoking policy

The Tenant agrees not to smoke tobacco or any other substance within the property. The tenant also agrees that he is responsible for ensuring that no visitors, guests or relatives smoke within the premises. We would like to remind you that the deposit may be used to recover costs for any damage deemed, at the end-of-tenancy inspection, to be caused by failure to adhere to the terms of the lease.

Dangerous Substances

The Tenant must not store keep on or bring into the premises or any store, shed or garage, inflammable liquids or explosive gasses which might reasonably be considered to be a fire hazard or otherwise dangerous to the premises or its occupants or the neighbours or the neighbour's property.

Reasonable Care

The Tenant agrees to take reasonable care of the accommodation and any common parts, and in particular agrees to take all reasonable steps to:

- I. keep the accommodation aired and heated;
- II. not bring any hazardous or combustible goods or material into the accommodation
- III. not to pour any oil, grease, or other damaging materials down the drains or waste pipes;
- IV. prevent water pipes freezing in cold weather;
- V. avoid danger to the accommodation or neighbouring properties by way of fire or flooding.

Pets

The tenant shall not keep any pet in the accommodation unless he has obtained the prior consent of the landlord in writing. Such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any pet (where permitted) will be kept under supervision and control to ensure that it does not cause deterioration in the accommodation, deterioration in the condition of common areas or nuisance either to neighbours or persons in the locality of the property. If the tenant fails to exert reasonable supervision and control, the landlord shall be entitled to withdraw his consent and request immediate removal of the pet. The tenant undertakes to meet the cost of any damage or soiling to the accommodation caused by the pet including but not limited to de-infestation where required.