

Dealing with mould

- First treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not appear again.
- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum-cleaning it can increase the risk of respiratory (breathing) problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good-quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould returning. This paint is not effective if you cover it with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to

Get rid of moisture

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Environmental Health Department

Townhall
2 Townhall Street
Enniskillen
Co Fermanagh
BT74 7BA

The Grange
Mountjoy Road
Lisnamallard
Omagh
BT79 7BL

Tel: 0300 303 1777

Email: eh@fermanaghomagh.com



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Condensation

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation often occurs during cold weather:

- On cold surfaces
- In areas of houses where the air doesn't move
- Near or on windows and
- In or behind cupboards or wardrobes

It often forms on north-facing walls.

Is your damp caused by condensation?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, getting in around window frames or leaking through a cracked pipe
- Rising damp due to a faulty damp course or because there is no damp course. These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark'.

- If your home is newly-built, it may be damp because the water used while it was being built (for example, in plaster) is still drying out.
If your home is damp for any of these reasons it may take weeks of heating and ventilation to dry out. Hiring a dehumidifier (a machine to remove moisture from the air) will help.
- If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, then it is probably condensation.
Condensation on walls and ceilings often causes mould, which is black with a speckled appearance.

How to cut down on condensation

1) Produce less moisture

Ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture, often very quickly.

You should:

- Cover boiling pans and not leave kettles boiling
- Avoid using paraffin and portable bottled-gas heaters which don't have flues as these heaters put a lot of moisture into the air
- Dry washing outdoors or in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or the fan turned on
- Vent tumble dryers to remove warm moist air to the outside (unless they are self-condensing).

2) Ventilate to remove moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts.

- Keep a small window or trickle ventilator open in a room you are using.
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when you are using them by opening the windows wider. Or better still, use a controlled electric fan. These come on automatically when the air becomes humid, and are cheap to run.

- Prevent moisture from reaching other rooms by closing the kitchen and bathroom doors when you are using them.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too many things in them as this stops the air circulating. Cut a ventilation slot in the back of each shelf or use slatted shelves. Cut 'breather' holes in doors and in the back of wardrobes and leave space between the back of the wardrobe and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- If you replace your window units, make sure the new frames have trickle ventilators.

3) Insulate, draught proof and heat your home

Insulation and draught proofing will help keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely.

- Insulate your loft but do not block the opening under the eaves.
- Consider cavity-wall insulation but remember you may need building regulation approval.
- Consider secondary and double glazing to reduce heat loss and draughts through windows but you must make sure that there is some ventilation.
- In cold weather keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home.

Some words of advice

Do not:

- Block permanent ventilators
- Completely block chimneys - leave a hole about the size of two bricks and fit a louvered grille over it as condensation can form in sealed chimneys
- Draughtproof rooms where there is condensation mould
- Draughtproof a room where there is a cooker or a fuel-burning heater, for example, a gas fire
- Draught proof windows in the bathroom and kitchen