



NORTH STAR

Creating homes, building futures

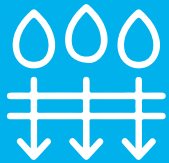
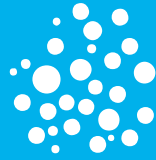
Damp, Mould and Condensation

A brief guide and information for occupiers and tenants
to help keep your property free from damp, mould and
condensation and creating a 'healthy home'



The information we provide here gives some basic details on the different types of dampness affecting homes. It also includes advice on identifying and reducing condensation, as well as some simple steps to treat the mould growth often resulting from it.

Condensation is probably the biggest cause of dampness in properties and reducing it contributes enormously towards a 'healthy home'.



Types of dampness

The four main types of dampness that could affect properties are;

- Rising/bridging dampness
- Penetrating dampness
- Defective plumbing
- Condensation

It is important to understand the difference between them so that you know what to do about the problem.

1. Rising/bridging dampness

This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. The water gets through or round a broken damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the natural brickwork if your home was built without a DPC. A DPC is a horizontal layer of waterproof material put in walls and concrete floors of a building just above ground level to stop water rising through the walls by capillary action.

Rising damp may be present all year round but is more noticeable in the winter as the water table below ground rises. If left untreated it may cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area.

Rising damp will only affect ground floor rooms. It will not normally rise any higher than 12 to 24 inches (300mm to 600mm) above ground level and usually leaves a 'tide mark' low down on the wall. You might also notice white salts in the affected areas.

Note: Black mould will rarely be seen where there is rising damp (and then only in the early stages). This is because rising damp carries ground salts within it, which can prevent the growth of black mould.

2. Penetrating dampness

This type of dampness will only be found on external walls or the section of internal walls where they are connected to the outside wall. In cases when the roof is leaking, it will be evident on ceilings. It only appears because of a defect outside the home, such as poor or missing pointing to the brickwork, cracked render or failing/missing roof tiles. These faults then allow water to pass from outside to inner surfaces.

Penetrating dampness is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp patch' that looks and feels damp to touch.

3. Defective Plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, are relatively common. They can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings

The affected area looks and feels damp to touch and remains damp whatever the weather conditions are outside. You can usually identify the source of the problem with a

quick check of the water and waste pipes serving the kitchen and bathroom and the seals around the bath, shower and sinks, plus external pipework such as guttering.

Note: Black mould will rarely be seen on this type of dampness because the area is usually too wet and the chemicals from a waste water leak do not generally support mould growth.



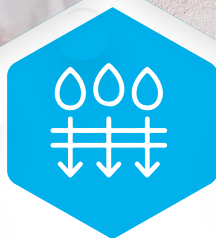
Symptoms	Likely to be	Next steps	Action
Tide mark on wall about 12" to 24" above the ground, possibly white salts showing.	Rising damp	Review against our images	Report issue to North Star
Damp patch on external wall or ceiling that appears or worsens during wet weather.	Penetrating damp	Review against our images	Report issue to North Star
Damp patch on internal/external wall or ceiling that stays damp, even during dry weather.	Defective plumbing	Review against our images	Report issue to North Star
Black mould growth around windows, in corners of rooms, on walls and ceilings, behind furniture and beds etc.	Condensation	See condensation information and review against our images	Report issue to North Star if it remains

Examples of different types of damp



Rising Damp

Penetrating Damp



Black Mould





4. Condensation

Moisture is always present in the air, even if cannot be seen.

Warm air holds more moisture than cold air, and when air is cold or cooled it holds less moisture. If cooled far enough, the air releases excess moisture and droplets of water are formed on surfaces. This is known as condensation.

Examples of this are when you see your breath in cold weather, or when both the mirrors and the cold tap steam up in a bathroom.

In your home, condensation is often seen on windows, which is usually more noticeable on cold mornings, on external walls or in places where air movement is restricted. This can include corners of rooms, behind items of furniture placed against walls and even in wardrobes.

Condensation usually occurs more during the colder autumn/winter months between October and April.

Its presence is often first indicated by the development of mildew (the common name for mould) growth on walls and ceilings, and sometimes it can even appear on furniture, clothes and on other fabrics. This mould growth could also lead to the rotting of affected timbers, such as wooden window frames.

Most homes will be affected by condensation at some point.

However, certain activities can contribute to the production of condensation.

In your home, condensation can be related to modern living standards, the building condition, economic pressure and change in building design.

The main factors contributing to the amount of condensation in a property are:

- How much water vapour is produced by general day-to-day activities
- How cold or warm your home is
- How much air circulation (ventilation and extraction) there is
- Poor insulation levels.

Simply turning up the heating will not resolve the problem and may only temporarily reduce condensation.

All four factors may need to be looked at to reduce the problem.

Condensation over an extended period allows surfaces to become damp, creating the environment for black mould to grow.

Mildew (black mould)

Mould spores are always present in the atmosphere, inside and outside of homes, and are invisible to the human eye.

The spores only become visible when they multiply and grow on a surface with the right conditions to flourish, i.e. cold and damp often resulting from condensation.



Amount of water produced by day-to-day activities



Day-to-day activity (in pints)

Bath or shower



Washing dishes



Drying clothes indoors



Cooking and using a kettle



Two people at home for 16 hours



Use of a bottled gas (LPG) heater



Tips to produce less moisture:

- Cover pans when cooking.
- Don't leave kettles boiling.
- Keep kitchen doors closed and open windows instead.
- Use an extractor fan when cooking, if you have one.
- Keep bathroom doors closed and open the windows instead.
- When filling the bath, run the cold water first and then add hot water, as this reduces the amount of steam produced.
- Use an extractor fan when showering or bathing, if you have one.
- If possible, dry washing outside and avoid drying clothes inside.
- If you need to dry clothes indoors, dry them in the bathroom on an airer, with the door closed and the extractor fan running and/or a window slightly open.
- You can also dry clothes indoors in another heated and well-ventilated room with the door closed.
- If you use a tumble dryer, ventilate it directly to the outside air, never into the home, unless it is a self-condensing model.
- Try not to place damp clothes on or near a radiator – it will dry them, but will release the moisture straight into your room.
- Do not use paraffin or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG or bottled) gas heaters, if possible. They produce large amounts of moisture - approximately one litre of fuel produces one litre of moisture.
- Evaporation from fish tanks can be severe, so always keep fish tanks covered.
- Try not to let pets sleep in your bedroom.
- If possible, have a shower rather than a bath as less moisture is produced.
- Don't leave the kitchen sink or bath full of water, as this evaporates into the home atmosphere.
- After a bath or shower, remove excess moisture from walls, tiles and shower screens to reduce the amount of water released into the atmosphere.

Removing excess moisture

Removing excess moisture from surfaces is a simple but useful way to decrease the effects of condensation.

Always remove condensation from the windows and windowsills of your home every morning. This is especially important in bedrooms, your bathroom and the kitchen – just opening the window is not enough. The water will simply evaporate back into the home and get added to by daily activities. This will increase the production and effects of condensation.

After a bath or shower, remove excess moisture from walls, tiles and shower screens to reduce the amount of water released into the atmosphere



Tips on ventilating to remove moisture

Removing condensation and excess moisture is important and can be achieved by ventilating rooms. Rooms can be ventilated without creating draughts or making them cold.

Create cross ventilation and air changes by opening windows at opposite ends of the room or property (upstairs and downstairs) as this allows moist, warm air to escape outside and brings in cool, dry air

Extractor fans are extremely cheap to run and effective at reducing moisture. Some operate automatically when moisture levels in rooms are high, so please leave them running and use any 'booster' functions when cooking or bathing.

Please report a repair for any defective fans so that we can either repair or replace them.

- Keep trickle vents in windows (where fitted) open.
- Open windows, even if only on the 'night lock' setting.
- Open interior doors to allow air to circulate.

- Open windows wider during cooking, washing, drying clothes, bathing etc.
- Use extractor fans, if you have them.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes – this can be done by providing breather holes in the units' false backs.
- Do not overfill cupboards and wardrobes and use slatted shelves if possible.
- Leave sufficient space to allow air circulation between furniture and walls.
- Avoid standing furniture hard up against external walls, thus allowing air to circulate.
- Do not block air vents, as these may also be providing adequate air supply to keep your boiler/heating appliances operating safely.
- Make sure that opening windows will not cause a security risk and remember to close and lock them when you leave the property.

Heating to reduce moisture

The best way to heat your home effectively is to have more constant but low background heat. This will enable both the air and the building fabric to be warmed, therefore creating warmer surfaces. The devices on your heating system, e.g. your room thermostat and timer together with thermostatic controls on radiators, help control the heating throughout your home and manage costs.

North Star recognises that, with the cost-of-living crisis, it is very difficult for many households to heat their homes due to the high costs of their energy. Our Welfare Benefits Team is available to offer advice and assistance specific to your individual circumstances, whether it is about applying for benefits or grants or signposting you to another agency that can help you further.





Treating mould in your home

The development of mould in affected areas is often the first indication of condensation.

What should I do if I find mould in my home?

- Report it to North Star immediately.
- Do not brush or vacuum the mould as this can release spores into the air.
- Remove non-wipeable/washable coatings and loose material.
- Repair any surface defects.
- Wash down with an appropriate fungicidal solution. Then apply a second fungicidal wash, cleaning the affected areas and allow to dry.
- Redecorate using an appropriate fungicidal paint.

For more information, you can contact us by:

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