

# A Guide to Condensation, Dampness and Mould Growth



# Introduction

The Caledonia Group is committed to ensuring the health & safety of our tenants by preventing wherever possible the occurrence of condensation, dampness & mould in the homes we provide.

If you are experiencing damp, mould or condensation in your home please report this to us as soon as possible. The Association will respond to instances of condensation, dampness & mould promptly and with compassion to limit its impact on your enjoyment of your home.

We will focus on identifying and tackling the root cause of the problem and work towards preventing it from reoccurring.

The following information sets out what we will do when you report the occurrence of condensation, dampness or mould within your property

## What will happen when I report Dampness, Mould or Condensation to you?

### When you first call us:

When you call our Customer Solutions Telephone line on :

**0800 678 1228**

we will ask you a few questions so that we have accurate details of the problem you are experiencing.

If there is an obvious issue, such as a faulty appliance, we will issue a works order for a contractor to fix this.



Where a works order is issued, it will also include actions to remove any mould, treat the wall surface and possibly re-decoration if the issue is severe. The situation will then be monitored through a follow up contact some 6 weeks later.

Our team will offer you advice and help on how to reduce or manage the source of the condensation or dampness and mould in order to resolve the matter and to prevent it from re-occurring.

Please also look at our website for more information and our short film which helps explain some situations in the home.

## **If a Property Inspection is Required**

If the initial description of the damp problem does not indicate a faulty appliance or an issue with the fabric of the building, or our advice has not resolved the problem, a property inspection will be carried out by a suitable trained technical staff member.

The inspection will be arranged within two working days of the initial contact and will be completed within 5 working days.



The inspection will include a thorough, comprehensive review of the property and the damp problem.

Photographs, notes and technical readings will be taken to record the location, nature and extent of the issue.

If the cause of the damp or mould is obvious to us, the necessary works to resolve the issue will be instructed and these may involve repairs or replacement of faulty appliances or to rectify a building defect.

As before, where works are instructed these will include actions to remove any mould, treat the wall surface and possibly re-decoration if the issue is severe.

Further advice will be provided to you if the technical inspection determines that the damp or mould issues are being created by, or being contributed to, any household's activities. Often the way household appliances are used or not used in some cases, can have a detrimental impact on introducing damp and mould and if we think this may be the case we will provide you with our findings and best practice advice.

On occasions consideration will be given to the installation of suitable equipment to measure and record household temperatures and humidity levels over a reasonable period of time.

Where the technical inspection does not identify a cause of the damp or mould, further investigative works will be instructed which may require the use of specialist consultants or contractors.

## **Decanting or Re-housing**

In certain circumstances or in severe cases we may be required to decant you or arrange for a longer-term solution whilst we address the works required.

In these rare occasions, our Housing Team will discuss what those options are and how we can help you further.

## What Can Tenants Do To Help?

Condensation and mould can be a common problem which is often found as misted up windows or as small pools on window sills. Excessive damp in a house can lead to mould growth and mites which can increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Whilst Caledonia will provide a proactive response to reports of damp or mould, the information in this leaflet will help you to deal with the problem of condensation which can lead to mould.

## What is Condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, and most of the time you cannot see it. When the air becomes colder it cannot hold the same amount of water, and small drops of water can then appear as condensation. You can see this moisture for example on a mirror when you have a bath, or when you see your clouds of breath on a cold day.



Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. It does not leave a 'tidemark', but appears in places where there is little or no movement of air.

Look for black mould in corners and on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards where there is reduced air flow.

Mould may also be found on clothing or soft furnishings. It more commonly forms on north-facing walls which don't get direct heat from the sun.

## **Is Condensation Causing The Damp & Mould?**

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also arise from penetrating causes such as:

- Leaking pipes, wastes and overflows
- Rain coming through a roof where a tile or slate is missing
- Water spilling over from a blocked rhone (gutter), or penetrating around window frames or damaged roof flashings
- Penetrating damp often leaves a 'tidemark', and you should call our repairs line (see back page of this leaflet for the number) and have the problem dealt with.
- If you are living in a newly built home, it may be that water used during its construction is still drying out.
- If your home is damp for any of these reasons it may take some weeks of ventilation to dry out even when the source of the problem has been dealt with.
- If you do not think the damp has arisen from a penetrating cause, or your property has not been newly built, then it is very likely to be caused by condensation.

## **What can I do about it?**

You can remove any mould by washing down with a bleach type solution or fungicidal wash, and you can buy special paints which may help to prevent the mould coming back.

Dry clean mildewed clothes and shampoo affected carpets. Brushing or vacuuming mould affected areas only increases the risk of causing respiratory problems.

The only certain cure to condensation is to reduce the amount of moisture produced in your home, and to keep it warm and well ventilated. By doing this, you will stop the condensation forming before it becomes a problem.

Remember, the way you live in your home affects the amount of condensation you get. You won't need to make drastic changes, just bear these main points in mind:



## **Doors**

Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut, particularly if you are cooking, washing or bathing – otherwise water vapour will spread throughout your home and condensation is then likely to occur on external walls and ceilings in colder rooms.



## **Windows**

The more moisture you produce in your home, the greater your chances of getting condensation and mould – unless you have adequate ventilation. Your house doesn't need to be draughty, but open your windows or window vents for a short period when they are misted up.

If you are fitting window draught stripping, leave a small gap for air to get through.



## Ventilation

Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut, particularly if you are cooking, washing or bathing – otherwise water vapour will spread throughout your home and condensation is then likely to occur on external walls and ceilings in colder rooms.



## Saucepans and Kettles

Try not to allow saucepans and kettles to boil any longer than is necessary, and always put the lid on your saucepan



## Drying Clothes Indoors

If you are drying clothes, open a window nearby to allow air to circulate, otherwise condensation will increase.

If you are using a tumble dryer, it is important that it vents to the outside.



## Cupboards and Wardrobes

Allow free air circulation by not placing wardrobes and furniture too close to the walls.

Try not to overfill your cupboards and wardrobes to ensure air can circulate freely within them.

You can fit ventilators in the doors, and leave a space at the back of shelves.



## Heating

You will get much less condensation if you keep all rooms in your home warm most of the time.

It is better to keep an even temperature throughout the day rather than heating your home up from a cold start each time.

If your heating is off for long periods the temperature drops and condensation will form.

It may cost a bit more in the short term, but leaving your heating on at a lower level will reduce condensation, damp and the likelihood of mould forming.



## Chimneys

Never block chimneys as this could be dangerous.

If you are covering a fireplace, you must at least fit an air vent to allow ventilation.

**The takeaway message is that by simply reducing moisture production where possible and by keeping your house warm and well ventilated, this will reduce condensation and damp, and deny mould the conditions it needs to grow.**

**Additional information is available on the internet and from your local council. If you need further advice please phone Caledonia, or talk to a member of our staff.**

**For further information and advice please:**

Visit our websites: [caledoniaha.co.uk](http://caledoniaha.co.uk) or [cordalehousing.org.uk](http://cordalehousing.org.uk)

Email: [info@caledoniaha.co.uk](mailto:info@caledoniaha.co.uk) or [info@cordalehousing.org.uk](mailto:info@cordalehousing.org.uk)

Call our customer solutions team: 0800 678 1228

