



## **Advice about Condensation**

Condensation is a relatively modern phenomenon largely caused by lack of ventilation.

The effects of condensation are most visible on window glass, where large amounts of water form on the cold glass.

Warm air inside buildings is capable of holding a great deal of moisture, however when the air cools the moisture is released, causing condensation. The window glass being much cooler than other surfaces is the first indication of a condensation problem, however condensation can also occur within the walls and fabric of the building often confused with rising or penetrating damp.

As water deposited as condensation is pure, damp areas caused by condensation are characteristic by a black or grey mould growth, mould cannot thrive on damp areas contaminated with salt which is the case with penetrating or rising damp. Therefore mould and damp are almost exclusively caused by condensation. The most common areas for damp and mould growth caused by condensation are at the skirting level where the wall is cooler and in corners of wall and ceiling, or behind furniture and the like where the air flow is restricted.

The average household produces around 14 litres or 24 pints of water vapour per day, this vapour must be allowed to vent to the outside air, if allowed to linger this amount of water will be deposited into the building fabric causing considerable damage. The main sources of water vapour are as follows:

Drying clothes

Cooking

Kettles

Washing machines

Bathing

It is therefore of vital importance that you ensure that you allow adequate ventilation at all times but particularly when the above activities are taking place.

Most condensation problems occur during the period October to April, this is when the fabric of the building is cooler, windows are closed and the warm moisture laden air is retained in the property. If this air is allowed to cool sufficiently it will release the moisture, either on window glass or on walls and ceilings, curtains and fabrics, anything that is cool. This pure water then permits the growth of mould spores. Condensation is the product of your day to day activities, coupled with lack of ventilation. When properties were heated with open fires, condensation was almost unheard of. This was because of the vast amount of ventilation permitted by chimneys. However the downside of this was permanent draughts as air travelled through the property.

However condensation can be controlled. Allowing adequate escape of vapour laden air through partially opened windows or by fans, and keeping the fabric of the building relatively warm will help

to prevent condensation forming within the property. Prevent moist air from cooking and bathing spreading to other rooms by keeping doors closed to the kitchen and bathroom. Drying clothes in the house creates enormous amounts of moisture, which will cause problems if not controlled.

Remember the only way to control condensation is by adequate ventilation.