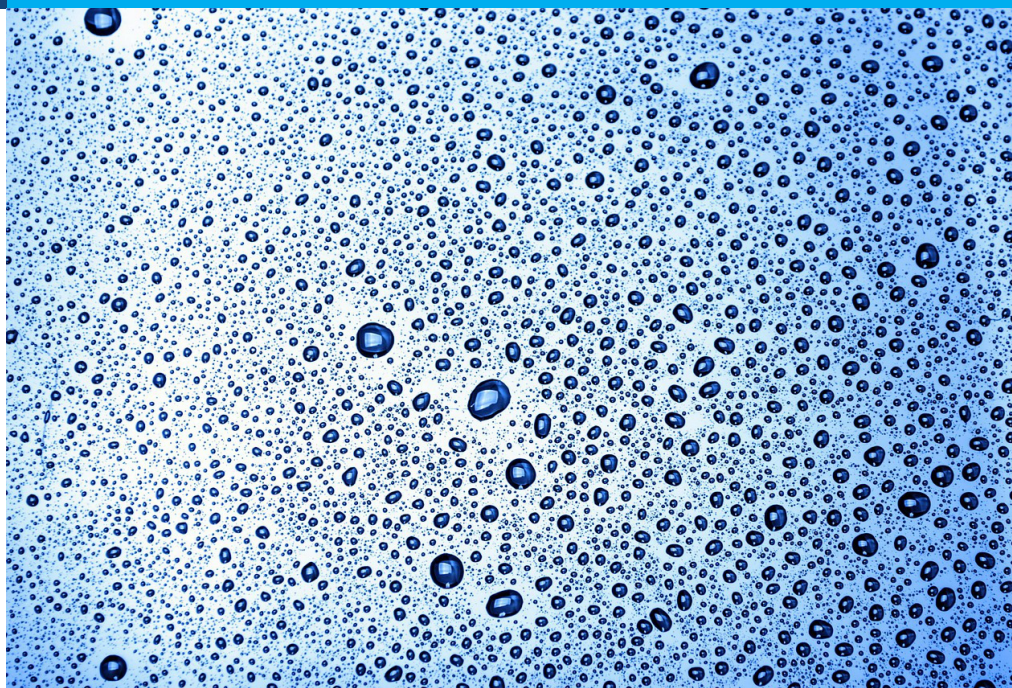


Dealing with Condensation and Mould



St Albans
City & District Council

Housing Services

This leaflet explains how condensation causing mould growth forms and how you can keep it to a minimum.

What is condensation?

Condensation is the most common form of damp in properties. It appears when excess moisture in the air comes into contact with a cold surface, such as a window or a cold wall. It can be caused by occupants not ventilating or heating their home properly. It can also be caused by poor insulation, or faulty heating and ventilation systems.



Why is it a problem?

Left untreated, condensation can result in mould growth on walls and ceilings, furnishings, and clothing. It can affect plaster and cause woodwork to rot. It can also increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Control excess moisture

- Close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam escaping. When cooking or washing, open a window or use an extractor fan for 20 minutes to allow steam to escape
- Open windows in other rooms each day and open trickle vents in your window frames
- Always wipe down surfaces when moisture settles to prevent mould forming
- Do not block air vents and allow air to circulate around furniture and cupboards
- Never use bottled gas or paraffin heaters which produce lots of moisture and can be dangerous

Produce less moisture

- Cover pans when cooking
- Dry clothes outdoors or use a vented tumble dryer
- Cover fish tanks and remember that house pets and plants produce moisture as well
- Ensure your washing machine or tumble drier is vented in accordance with manufacturers' instructions
- If possible, keep low background heat on all day. It usually helps to have a temperature of at least 15°C in all rooms

Some Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ Do treat mould already in your home and reduce condensation to restrict new mould growth.
- ✓ Do wipe off mould growth immediately with clean water.
- ✓ Do wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash. Always follow the instructions carefully. Do not use bleach.
- ✓ Do dry-clean clothes affected by mildew and shampoo carpets.
- ✓ Do redecorate after treatment using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.
- ✓ Do open bedroom windows, for up to one hour, when you get up.
- ✓ Do use extractor fans in your bathroom and kitchen.
- ✗ Don't block permanent ventilators or chimneys.
- ✗ Don't draught proof windows in the bathroom or kitchen or in rooms where there is condensation or mould growth, or where there is a gas cooker or a fuel-burning heater like a gas fire.
- ✗ Don't put furniture against cold external walls.
- ✗ Don't disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning.



Homeowners who think they have a problem with damp in their home should seek advice from a damp specialist.

Tenants in rental accommodation who think they have a problem with damp in their home should report this to their landlords. Where the matter is still unresolved private tenants can seek advice from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team at privatesectorhousing@stalbans.gov.uk. Further advice is found on our website at www.stalbans.gov.uk/tenants