Reducing condensation

Condensation is caused by steam or water vapour when it meets cold surfaces (in the same way that steam in the bathroom condenses on the window).

If allowed to persist it can sometimes cause mold on walls and ceilings. In exceptional circumstances condensation and mold can damage clothes, bedding, floor coverings and decoration.

The following advice should help reduce condensation:

Produce less moisture

- Cover pots/pans when cooking to reduce steam.
- Avoid drying clothes indoors over radiators.

Put washing outdoors to dry if you can. If you use a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to the outside air (unless it is a self-condensing type). DIY vent kits are available from most DIY stores.

Stop moisture spreading through the home

- Use the cooker hood and/or extractor fans and keep doors closed when cooking, washing or bathing. This will prevent water vapour spreading throughout the house and minimise the risk of condensation reaching other rooms.

Ventilate moisture away

- Ventilation is needed to get rid of the moisture that is naturally produced every day in your home. The trickle vents (slotted vents in the window frames) are intended to provide constant background ventilation and should be left open when rooms are occupied. These vents should not be blocked or obstructed.
- If windows are misted up, open the window slightly until surface condensation has evaporated.

Circulation space

- Do not overfill cupboards and wardrobes, leave enough space to allow air to circulate and leave a space at the back of the shelves.
- Do not place wardrobes or beds against external walls. If they must be positioned against an external wall, leave a gap of around 20cm to allow air to circulate.

Provide Even Heating

- Houses where the heating is off all day because the occupants are out, are more likely to suffer condensation problems than those heated more continually. This is because when normal activities such as washing and cooking are carried out in the evening, the home has been unheated for long periods and so surfaces are cold. Condensation forms more easily on cold surfaces.
- Make sure the central heating timer is set so that your house is warm by the time your return home. During very cold weather it is better to leave the heating on during the day to maintain an even temperature. The temperature can be set a few degrees lower and turned up when you return.