

# Tackling damp, mould and condensation

Damp and condensation can cause black mould to grow in your home. It's a common problem in British homes, but we can work together to manage it.

In this leaflet, we:

- describe the steps we can take as your landlord, and
- we offer advice on how you can improve things by making simple changes to the way you live.

Be assured that we take all cases of damp and mould seriously, because we know that living in a home with mould can be bad for your health.

You are always welcome to phone WFHA for further advice.

## What's causing your mould?

Mould grows in damp homes. So, it's important to start by working out what is causing your home to be damp.

Your damp problem could be caused by:

- a fault with the building that needs to be repaired, or
- (most commonly) too much condensation.



## A problem with the building

A leaky roof, pipe or guttering, or a problem with the plumbing in your home or your neighbour's home can all cause water to soak into walls and ceilings.

In older buildings, some basement or ground floor flats may suffer from rising damp – where groundwater soaks up into the bricks or concrete.

A problem with the structure of



the building you live in is your landlord's responsibility. If you can see a problem like this, report it to us as soon as you can, so that we can take action.

## Problems caused by condensation

**The most common cause of damp is condensation. Condensation is the moisture that forms when warm, damp air touches a cold surface. Too much condensation can also cause mould.**

As a responsible landlord, our aim is to keep your homes well maintained, including providing you with fans in your kitchen and bathroom, and an efficient heating system. These will all help you to manage condensation in your home.

However, the most important factor in damp caused by condensation is the way you use your home.

Taking note of the simple tips we give in this leaflet can help you limit and get rid of any mould that forms.



# How to reduce condensation

If your home suffers from mould caused by condensation, you need to make some changes to the way you use your home.

Your aim should be to:

- make less moisture
- remove any condensation that forms
- keep your rooms well aired
- keep your home warm
- treat any spots of black, and mould that appear with an anti-fungal spray.



## 1. Make less moisture

**Everyday activities put moisture into the air. There are steps you can take to limit this.**

- Avoid drying washing indoors and especially on radiators. If you have no option, dry your washing in the bathroom with the door shut and the fan running, or with a window left open.
- Keep the filters of your tumble dryer clean and regularly empty any water collected. Your machine will get warm when it's in use, so leave a gap around it for air to circulate.



- Cover boiling pans and turn off kettles quickly. Keep kitchen doors shut while cooking.



- Keep bathroom doors shut when you are showering or taking a bath.
- Put the cold water in first, if you are running a bath.





## 2. Remove condensation

**When drops or pools of water form on windows and cold surfaces, be ready to remove them.**

- Wipe down windows and sills, or use a rechargeable window vacuum cleaner, to remove condensation and pools of water. Ideal times to do this are first thing in the morning and after cooking in the evening.



- Reduce the moisture left on tiling and shower screens, after showering, by giving them a quick wipe down.

- Running a dehumidifier will remove excess water and make your home feel warmer. A larger version is pictured, but you can also buy small ones to focus on a particularly damp spot.



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## 3. Keep rooms well aired

**You need fresh air to move freely around your home. Mould will tend to grow in places where damp air gets trapped.**

- Always use your bathroom and kitchen fans until the steam has gone. Opening a window will speed this up. Keep your fans clean – they won't work properly if they are clogged up with dust.



- Keep windows around your home open for a while every day (five to 10 minutes is enough) and always keep trickle vents open.



- Keep curtains or blinds open for at least four to five hours every day, so that trickle vents can work properly and to stop mould growing around your windows.



- Pull any furniture away from the wall to leave a gap for air to circulate. Avoid putting furniture right next to external walls.



- Try not to overfill cupboards and wardrobes. Opening the doors for a while each day can help remove stale air.

## 4. Heat your home

**In the winter, try to keep every room in your home heated to at least 15 degrees during the daytime.**

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills, you can:

- contact your energy provider to agree a plan you can afford, and/or
- go to [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) to search for grants and to check you are getting all the benefits you can claim.

If you are in crisis, go to your Council's website, to check out the hardship support they offer.

You may be able to get vouchers to help you buy food or essential



household items, or to pay energy bills.

You are always welcome to call WFHA for advice.



### **Waltham Forest Housing Association**

The Energy Centre  
31 Church Hill  
Walthamstow  
London E17 3RU

Email us at:



- [info@wfha.org.uk](mailto:info@wfha.org.uk) (general queries)
- [repairs@wfha.org.uk](mailto:repairs@wfha.org.uk), or
- [complaints@wfha.org.uk](mailto:complaints@wfha.org.uk)

During office hours (weekdays, 9am to 5pm), call us on 020 8524 6987, then select:

- Option 1 for repairs
- Option 2 for housing management (to pay your rent, talk about benefits or other housing issues)
- Option 4 for governance (for enquiries about the Tenant Scrutiny Panel and tenant surveys).

For a non-gas emergency outside office hours, call our emergency contractors on 020 8524 2822.

Out of hours, if your gas heating system fails in severe weather and you have no alternative, call Swale Heating on 01795 503 365.

 [walthamforesthousingassociation](https://www.facebook.com/walthamforesthousingassociation)  
 [@walthamforestha](https://twitter.com/walthamforestha)

## 5. Treat spots of mould

**It's important to treat any mould that appears quickly, so that it doesn't spread.**

Wipe away spores using a mould cleaner, while wearing gloves and a mask, and keeping the area well aired as you do this. This is to avoid breathing in the spores. Throw away the cloth afterwards.



Once the mould is removed, painting walls and ceilings with anti-mould paint can stop mould returning for several years. (Remember that painting inside your home is one of your tenant responsibilities.)

### **Waltham Forest Housing Association**

## **We're here to help**

**We hope you have found this leaflet useful.**

If you need more information or you would like us to visit your home to give you more advice about your problem with damp, mould and condensation, give us a call.