
Damp, condensation and mould

Damp in the home encourages the growth of mould and mites and can increase the risk of respiratory illness. Damp and mould can damage the building and its contents. Your Estate Manager can offer advice on any of these problems. If the problem persists your Estate Manager will discuss it with the Technical Manager.

What are the causes of damp?

Damp can come from

- Leaking pipes
- Rain penetration
- Rising damp
- Condensation
- Faulty seals around showers or baths
- Water used in building works (plaster, concrete, mortar)

Identifying the source of damp

These are some of the things our Technical Manager will look for. You may wish to look for yourself if you feel able. Do not put yourself in any risk. If you suspect any of these are causes of damp, please let us know and we will investigate. Damp from leaking pipes, faulty seals and rain penetration will usually create a distinct patch.

Damp from leaking waste pipes or faulty seals will get worse after the fitting is used. Check for:

- Water dripping from the lowest point on a pipe;
- Water soaking into the wall, ceiling or floor where a pipe passes through, although the leak may be from a joint higher up;
- Seals between baths/shower trays and the tiling or other surrounds. Listen for drips or hissing pipes when no water is being used

Damp from rain penetration

It will vary with the weather conditions, including the direction and strength of the wind.

Rising damp

Is caused by moisture in the ground soaking up into the building and will often leave a tide mark. The most likely cause is soil or paving being too high – it should be two bricks below the damp-proof course.

Damp from building works

May affect new buildings and repairs. It will dry out over time, although a dehumidifier may be necessary to speed up the process.

Damp from condensation

Occurs mainly during colder weather, does not leave a tidemark and can occur whether it is raining or dry. It appears on colder surfaces and in places where there is little air movement.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air is cooled it cannot hold all of the moisture and tiny drops of water appear – this is condensation. You see this when your warm breath on a cold day causes a plume of vapour or when you take a bath or shower and the mirror mists over.

Moisture in the home is produced by cooking and boiling kettles, washing and bathing and just by breathing. Problems occur when there is too much moisture and air and surface temperatures are too low.

How to avoid condensation problems

1. Produce less moisture

- Cover pans when cooking and don't leave kettles boiling.
- Dry washing by hanging it on an outdoor line or by using a tumble dryer. (If this is in the home it should be vented to the outside, unless it is a condensing-type). If you cannot do this, hang washing in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or extractor fan on.

2. Ventilate to remove moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts:

- Keep a trickle vent in the window open or small window ajar (modern windows usually have a secure ventilation facility).
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms during/after use by using an extractor fan if there is one or by opening windows. Close the doors to restrict the amount of moisture that can pass to the other parts of your home.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid tightly packing them as this stops air circulating. Leave space between wardrobes and the walls and where possible put furniture against internal walls.

3. Insulation and heating of your home

Where reasonably practicable, Hanover will have built or upgraded your home to a good standard of loft and wall insulation with draught-proofing of doors and windows. Remember that some ventilation is necessary, especially if you have a gas cooker.

- Try to keep your entire home moderately warm, so there are less cold surfaces on which condensation can form.

Dealing with mould

First treat any mould and deal with the basic problem of condensation. Mould can be killed by wiping down walls and window/door frames with a fungicidal wash.

Any instructions should be followed precisely. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Avoid brushing or vacuum cleaning mould as this can increase the risk of respiratory problems. After treatment redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. Do not overlay this paint with ordinary paint or wallpaper.

The only long-term way to avoid severe mould is to eliminate dampness. If mould or condensation occur due to your life style, you will be responsible for dealing with this. We will put right anything which is due to faulty building work.