

Identifying and preventing ... DAMP & CONDENSATION

- A guide for South Ayrshire Council Tenants -

What is condensation?

If you find water on the inside of your window or on other cold surfaces in your home, it is likely to be condensation.

Condensation is caused when warm moist air meets cold surfaces. It happens mainly in winter when the building is cold and windows are not open as much. Reducing the moisture content in the air can help prevent condensation. One way of doing this is to make sure your home is properly ventilated, but a combination of heating and ventilation is the best way to prevent condensation.

If you have regular condensation in your home, you may also find some black mould on the walls or blue/green mould on areas of leather or wood. If you do have mould, it is usually found in cold corners or areas with less air circulation space.

How to get rid of mould:

- As soon as you start to see mould growth you need to clean it away.
- Wear rubber gloves and wipe the mould off the area using a cloth and anti-mould remover - one which carries a Health and Safety Executive approved number. These are available in supermarkets and DIY stores and should become part of your regular cleaning routine.
- Mould can be washed out of fabrics but may leave a stain. Mildewed clothes should be dry cleaned.
- Avoid vacuuming/sweeping affected carpets - shampoo them instead.
- If you redecorate, use a good quality anti-mould paint or fungicidal wallpaper paste.

What can cause condensation in your home?

Poor ventilation

If a house is not well ventilated, it can result in problems with dampness and condensation. Issues can occur if air vents in the home are blocked up, or if mechanical ventilation is regularly not being used (e.g. kitchen or bathroom extractor fans).

You can help improve ventilation and air circulation in your home, and prevent condensation by:

- Checking and cleaning air vents in your home (e.g., on your windows and walls).
- Always using the provided extractor fans in your home
- Opening windows when cooking or washing.
- Drying clothes outside whenever possible, and venting tumble dryers externally.
- Leaving spaces for air to circulate behind your furniture.

Lack of heat in your home

If your home is not being adequately heated, this can also create or worsen any condensation levels you experience within your home. If financing the heating of your home is something you are struggling with, you may contact the Council's Information and Advice Hub - South Ayrshire Council (south-ayrshire.gov.uk) on 0300 123 0900 for free and impartial advice on welfare rights and issues related to money and debt advice.

What can cause dampness in your home?

Building and property faults that are causing water to make its way into your home

Things like broken roof tiles, leaking gutters and pipes, damaged damp proofing or holes/cracks on walls are some things that can lead to dampness forming in your home if not suitably repaired.

You can help us prevent dampness in your home by telling us promptly about any repairs you think are needed in your home:

- Slates/tiles or roof coverings

Roof slates can break or come loose, and flat roof coverings can develop faults, especially in bad weather. After a storm

or bad weather, from the ground, check the area around your home for fallen slates or signs of damage to your roof covering.

- Gutters and rainwater down pipes.

Blocked gutters and pipes can lead to water spilling over and leaking into your home. Autumn leaves often cause blockages top gutters and down pipes. If you can see water overflowing or visible blockages with your gutters/rainwater pipes, let us know.

- Dampness on your Ceiling or tops of walls.

If you spot damp on the ceiling or at the top of walls, then this could be a sign of a leak from above. The leak may be coming from the roof or walls of your home, or from the property directly above you if there is one.

- Damp coming Up from the floor. If you have damp coming up through your floor or lower walls, there could be several causes such as:

- The outside ground is at level higher than the damp proof course (DPC) in your walls.
- Broken DPC.
- Leaks from plumbing and central heating.
- Leaks from gutters, down pipes and over flows.
- Blocked drains.

- Damp on the middle section of a wall.

- Hidden pipe work that has developed a leak.
- Something blocking the cavity in the wall, allowing damp to cross from the outer wall to the inner.
- Dampness resulting from an unused/damaged chimney flue.

If dampness or condensation issues in your home are identified early, and are effectively dealt with, it will usually only cause some minor inconvenience. However, if dampness issues remain untreated, they can lead to more serious problems for you and South Ayrshire Council as your landlord.

This article contains only general information on how to prevent, identify and treat dampness and condensation in your home.

If you have any concerns in respect of dampness or condensation issues within your Council home, please contact South Ayrshire Council Property Maintenance Services on 0300 123 0900 to arrange for a suitable assessment of your home environment to be promptly undertaken.

