

Condensation and mould can occur on any surface, look unpleasant, and can increase the risk of respiratory illness. Mould is usually black but can be other colours including greens, yellows, pinks, grey, or white.

### **What is condensation?**

Condensation starts as moisture in the air, usually produced by cooking, washing, or drying clothes indoors. When moist air meets cool surfaces such as mirrors, walls, wall tiles, and windows it condenses and forms water droplets.

The amount of condensation in homes depends on three factors:

1. How much water vapour is produced in the household.
2. How cold or warm the property is; and
3. How much air circulation (ventilation) there is.

The moist air rises when it is warm and often ends up on ceilings, walls and behind free-standing furniture such as wardrobes, and if the surfaces are not dried and aired regularly, mould growth will occur.

### **Why is condensation a problem?**

Left untreated, condensation can result in mould growth on walls, ceiling, furniture, furnishings, and clothing in cupboards and drawers.

High humidity has a cumulative effect in absorbent materials, such as clothing hanging in wardrobes or bedclothes making them damp. If these items are not dried, mould will develop. It can also affect plaster and cause woodwork to rot.

### **How do I prevent mould and condensation?**

A dry and well-aired home is easier to heat and healthier for you and your family. You can minimise the amount of moisture and condensation in your home by doing the following things:

- Open doors and windows as often as possible when you are at home
- Open windows and use the ducted exhaust fan when showering or using clothes drier
- Open windows and use an extractor fan when cooking
- Wipe condensation off walls when it occurs
- Wipe condensation off windows and windowsills every morning

- Keep curtains from touching the window glazing
- Regular cleaning of exhaust fans
- Regular cleaning of heat pump filters
- Maintain a low background heat, instead of short bursts of high heat when it is cold or wet outside
- Make sure clothes and shoes are well dried and aired before putting them away in a storage area
- Hang washing outside to dry
- Move items of furniture away from the wall to allow air to circulate

#### **How can I remove mould and mildew?**

Carefully remove excess mould with a damp cloth and throw away the cloth afterward.

The best way to treat mould is to kill it as soon as it appears and check it daily.

There are several products that kill mould or mildew, some natural remedies include:

- Tea tree oil mixed in a ratio of 1tsp of oil to 1 cup of warm water. Put it in a spray bottle and shake. Then spray on problem areas but do not rinse
- Put straight white vinegar in a spray bottle and spray directly on problem areas. Do not rinse. The smell will go away after a few hours.

All these products should be applied as soon as the mould appears as it is harder to remove it once it has been there a while.

Do not brush mould as this release's spores into the air.

The best thing you can do to prevent the mould from happening is to make sure your home is dry and well-aired.

#### **What should I do if I take actions to prevent mould and condensation but the mould won't go away?**

If you are having problems keeping the mould away or have further questions please contact your housing officer or our maintenance team on 1300 312 447.