

Control of moisture in your home

We all produce moisture through everyday activities such as respiration, cooking, cleaning, and washing; however, when not controlled, excessive amounts of moisture can lead to condensation, mould growth and damp problems. We can limit the humidity build up in our homes by controlling three main factors: **moisture production, room temperatures and ventilation.**

If you have had insulation installed, this will help reduce heat loss in the area where it's been installed and make it easier for you to maintain healthier temperatures in your home, but managing moisture creation and effective ventilation are also important factors in reducing the risk of condensation and mould growth.






What is the purpose of ventilation?

Building Regulations state:

"Ventilation is simply the removal of 'stale moist' indoor air from a building and its replacement with 'fresh' outside air."

In addition to the control of humidity, the benefits of adequate ventilation include:

-  supplying fresh external air to improve the quality of air within the dwelling
-  the dilution and removal of pollutants from cleaning products, new materials, paints, tobacco, smoke, etc
-  helping to reduce summertime overheating by bringing in cooler outside air during the night.

How can I control moisture production in my home?

Whether your home has been recently built, or you've had additional insulation added to an older property, insulation helps reduce heat loss and make it easier to maintain a higher temperature. Some older properties that have received insulation upgrades may be at higher risk from condensation as the insulation could block air flow, preventing moisture from escaping.

The moisture content needs to be controlled through ventilation; a simple ventilation system is mechanical extractor fans in wet rooms to remove moist air and background ventilators to allow fresh in. Higher humidity levels, when combined with colder surface temperatures on windows, walls and ceilings, increase the risk of condensation damage and mould growth. Removing the moisture is an advisable measure to reduce the potential for condensation.



Do

- ✓ Become familiar with the ventilation system in your property, understand what it is and how it works
- ✓ Read the information provided following the installation of a ventilation system. This will provide valuable information on how to maintain the system to ensure optimal performance
- ✓ Where possible, limit moisture production, for example putting lids on saucepans when cooking and always using an extractor hood if available
- ✓ Dry clothes outside wherever possible. If drying clothes inside, make sure the room is isolated and well ventilated
- ✓ Ensure the extractor fan is on when showering or cooking and for a period after you've finished too
- ✓ Try to isolate moisture in the 'wet rooms,' for example kitchens and bathrooms
- ✓ Clean and maintain ventilation systems, especially those that include filters



Don't

- ⊗ Switch off extractor fans, the cost of running them is normally minimal – approximately £3 to 4 per year in a bathroom. This is a small price to pay when compared to the cost of repairing damage from condensation or mould removal
- ⊗ Close trickle vents: they are essential for providing ongoing ventilation, which will improve indoor air quality



Are there other reasons that water damage and mould can form?

Whilst poor ventilation and low room temperatures can cause moisture damage, there are other potential causes of similar water damage including:

- leaking pipes, wastes, drainage, and overflows
- rainwater from defective roof coverings, blocked or leaking gutters and broken pipes
- penetrating dampness around windows, through walls and due to raised ground levels
- rising damp due to lack of, or no effective, damp proof course.

If you suspect that the moisture damage or mould growth is coming from one of these other sources, a specialist surveyor should be engaged to explore the cause of the problem and provide advice or propose solutions.





What should I do if I have a damp, condensation or mould problem?

If you believe you have water-based damage the first port of call should be to speak to the installer, but it is often difficult to diagnose the exact cause of such water damage as there are numerous other possible causes. If in doubt speak to a specialist such as TrustMark businesses who are members of the Property Care Association (PCA).

All PCA members specialising in dampness are required to have suitably qualified specialists on board. To demonstrate they have this knowledge, they are expected to have obtained the Certificated Surveyor in Dampness and Timber in buildings (CSTDB) qualification.

The PCA's nationwide list of contractor members are carefully vetted before being awarded membership and are then subjected to rigorous ongoing auditing procedures once admitted to the association. Contractor members of the PCA can offer insurance backed guarantees for much of the structural work they undertake.



About Property Care Association www.property-care.org

The Property Care Association (PCA) is the leading representative organisation for the UK's building protection industry. PCA's skilled and audited membership operates across the domestic sector in the structural repair, structural waterproofing, timber preservation, damp protection, flood remediation and invasive weed control industries.

Focused on the complete building envelope, PCA members' expertise helps protect the integrity and comfort of buildings and homes in both new build and refurbishment projects, guarding against problems such as moisture damage, damp, mould and decay.



About TrustMark www.trustmark.org.uk

TrustMark is the UK's only government-endorsed quality scheme, covering work a consumer chooses to have carried out in or around their home. TrustMark Registered Businesses are thoroughly vetted to meet required industry standards, giving you confidence in their technical competence, customer service, and trading practices.

We are passionate about quality and assurance and what that means for homeowners and our Registered Businesses.