

## *Reducing Condensation in Your Home and Keeping it Free from Damp and Mould*

Damp, condensation and mould are common problems in many properties. Damp or mouldy environments may cause respiratory health problems to worsen. It is important that you take steps to reduce damp and mould in your property

### **TYPES OF DAMP IN THE HOME**

- **Penetrating Damp** is caused by water seeping into your property from leaking pipes, guttering, overflows or holes in your roof. This type of damp leaves a 'tidemark' around the affected area.
- **Rising damp** (ground floor only) is caused by moisture in the ground being sucked up by the walls of the property due to a defective or missing damp-proof course. Damp won't rise more than a metre up the wall from ground level. Rising damp may cause plaster to flake and you may see render and salt deposits on internal walls and external brickwork.
- **Condensation** is the most common type of damp. There is always moisture in the air and when the air reaches cold surfaces (like your windows) tiny drops of water appear. Condensation mostly appears during cold weather in places where there is little movement of air like corners of rooms, behind wardrobes and near windows. Continual exposure to moisture will cause mould to grow in these places.



### **CAN I GET RID OF CONDENSATION?**

Yes. There are a number of things that you can do to reduce or get rid of it.

#### **1. Make less moisture**

- **Wipe the water from your windows and sills with a cloth** - but make sure you wring your cloth out in the sink. Do not put the wet cloth on a heater to dry - the water then evaporates back into the air and re-appears as condensation when the temperature drops. Wipe the water off every time it appears to get rid of the excess moisture in your home.
- **Don't dry washing inside your home** - all the water from your clothes will go straight into the air and as soon as the air cools you will get condensation on your windows and walls.
- **Put lids on your saucepans when cooking** - this keeps steam in the pan and saves money on your fuel bill.
- **Don't use paraffin or bottled gas heaters** - they produce lots of moisture - burning one gallon of paraffin puts about one gallon of water vapour into the air which re-appears as condensation on your windows or other cold surfaces.
- **Vent your tumble dryer outside** - if your dryer is not self-condensing make sure you put the hose out of a window to ensure the hot moisture-filled air produced by the machine does not condense inside your home - opening a window is not enough. Hose kits are available from most electrical and DIY stores.

## 2. Increase the ventilation

- **Use the trickle ventilators or night vents in your windows.** You need a good air flow to help get rid of moisture which is produced in your home all the time. Modern windows have pull-down flaps to help ventilate your home - keep these open as much as possible so damp air can escape. Some windows have a night vent so the window can be locked with it open just 15 to 20 mm
- **Open a window when cooking and after showering/bathing.** Boiling pans, hot baths and showers produce lots of steam - opening a window ensures this steam condenses outside rather than inside your home. It also helps to keep your kitchen and bathroom doors shut when these rooms are in use and for about 20 minutes after to stop moist air getting into other rooms. When your kitchen, bathroom or other rooms are not in use, leave doors open so heat can spread evenly through your home.
- **Allow air to circulate where possible.** Avoid putting furniture against outside walls of your home. Inside walls (between rooms) are always warmer and are less prone to condensation. Leave a gap between the wall and the furniture so air can circulate and ensure that wardrobes and cupboards are properly ventilated to prevent mould growing inside them.



## 3. Keep your home warm

When moisture condenses on your walls it makes them colder. This causes you to lose heat and increases the risk of mould growing. It then takes more energy to heat your home to a comfortable temperature which costs more. Heating your home efficiently helps reduce condensation and could save money on your heating bills. It is important to keep your home above 18 °C (63°F) - most people find a comfortable heat is around 21°C (70°F). You will get condensation if you let your home fall below 18°C

## 4. Remove mould as soon as you find it

You **MUST** remove mould as soon as you find it to stop it spreading and causing more damage to your home. You can get special cleaning products from DIY stores (always follow the manufacturer's instructions) or use a good quality bleach (mix 1 part bleach to 4 parts water) but remember bleach may take the colour out.

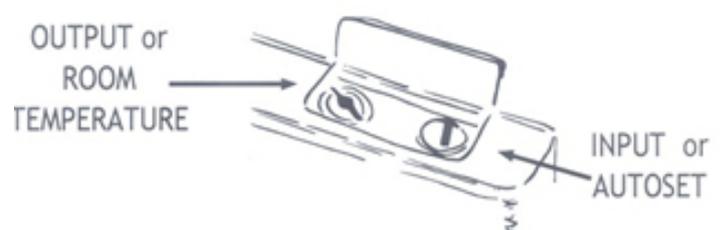
## HOW TO RUN STORAGE HEATERS EFFICIENTLY

Storage heaters have 2 dials under the flap:

An "OUTPUT" or "ROOM TEMPERATURE" dial which controls the amount and speed at which heat is released into your room during the day

An "INPUT" or "AUTOSET" dial which controls the amount of heat which goes into the storage heater overnight.

Setting your controls as shown in the table below is the most efficient way to run storage heaters and will help reduce the risk of condensation in your home.



Input or Auto set	Set control between 5 & 6	Ensures heater is fully charged overnight
Output or Room Temperature	Set control Between 2 & 3	Releases heat at a constant rate in the day

## Things to Remember

### Produce less moisture:

- Cover your saucepans when cooking
- Dry your washing outdoors
- Vent your tumble dryer to outside
- Avoid using paraffin or flueless bottled gas heaters

### Ventilate to remove moisture:

- Open a window when someone is in
- Increase ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom
- Shut the bathroom/kitchen doors when cooking/bathing
- Ventilate cupboards/wardrobes
- don't block vents in chimneys

### Insulate and draught proof:

- Check that your loft is properly insulated
- Draught proof windows and external doors
- Consider cavity insulation if not done

### Heat your home a little more:

- Keep low background heat on all day (if possible)
- Find out about benefits and help with fuel bills

### DO NOT:

- Turn your radiators or storage heaters off
- Turn off or isolate extractor fans
- Dry your washing on radiators
- Put too many clothes in your wardrobes or cupboards
- Use washing up liquid to wipe down mould
- Paint over mould. You must clean it properly and paint with special paint available from your local DIY store

### REMEMBER:

Condensation causes damp which leads to mould

The only way to avoid severe mould is to eliminate dampness

The only real way to reduce condensation is heat and ventilation

## Useful Contacts

Neighbourhood Services	0118 937 3757 Option 2	E-mail: <a href="mailto:neighbourhood.services@reading.gov.uk">neighbourhood.services@reading.gov.uk</a>
Housing Repairs	0800 318 296 or from a mobile: 0118 937 3757 Option 1	Website: <a href="http://www.reading.gov.uk/rbctenantrepairs">www.reading.gov.uk/rbctenantrepairs</a>
Housing Complaints	0118 937 2905	E-mail: <a href="mailto:housing.complaints@reading.gov.uk">housing.complaints@reading.gov.uk</a>
The Energy Saving Trust	0300 123 1234	Website: <a href="http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk">www.energysavingtrust.org.uk</a>

### Energy Saving Trust

The Energy Saving Trust is a non-profit organisation that provides free and impartial advice on how to reduce the amount of energy you use and save money.

Free advice for households: 0300 123 1234

Web: [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

### Job Centre Plus & DirectGov

For information and advice about benefits and cold weather payments:

Job Centre Plus: 0345 608 8610  
Adelphi House, Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1HD

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/heating>

*This information can be provided in alternative formats (Braille, audio, large print) and languages on request*