

Condensation and Dampness

Warm air holds more moisture than cold air. Condensation occurs when warm, moist air comes into contact with a cold surface, such as a single glazed window or an uninsulated external wall. When the moist air comes into contact with the cold surface it turns back into water droplets – condensation.

Everyday activities contribute to the amount of moisture in the air around our homes:

- **bathing** can result in 0.5 to 1 litre of additional moisture
- **cooking by gas** over 24 hours can result in 2 to 4 litres of additional moisture
- **using a bottled gas heater** can result in 4 litres of additional moisture
- **drying clothes** can result in 3 to 7.5 litres of additional moisture
- **2 people active for 16 hours** can result in 1.5 to 3 litres of additional moisture
- **2 people sleeping for 8 hours** can result in 0.5 litre of additional moisture

Condensation in the home is caused by:

- ☒ **Inadequate Heating**
- ☒ **Inadequate Insulation**
- ☒ **Inadequate Ventilation**
- ☒ **Producing Excessive moisture**

Human beings produce water vapour - this cannot be avoided. However, condensation dampness is different to other forms of dampness because the inhabitants may be able to exercise some control over the amount of condensation in the home.

Condensation dampness can occur in houses that are insufficiently heated, poorly insulated, or not properly ventilated. Installing loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and draughtproofing measures will reduce and minimise condensation in the home, as will effective use of heating. However, it is equally important to ensure that houses are properly ventilated.

Helpful tips on avoiding/minimizing condensation dampness include:

- keep lids on pans when cooking
- dry clothes outside when possible
- avoid using flueless bottled gas heaters
- ventilate all the time. Increase ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom when in use
- maintain a background heat all day in colder weather

See also Chapter III for details on the different physical measures which can be installed to prevent and reduce condensation and dampness.



Suite 4a
Ingram House
227 Ingram
Street
Glasgow
G1 1DA

Tel: 0141 226
3064

Fax: 0141 221
2788

Email:
eas@eas.org.uk

Website:
www.eas.org.uk

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