

## **DAMP & MOULD**

### **FACT SHEET**

#### **Is your home damp?**

Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and make timber window frames rot. Damp housing encourages the growth of mould, leads to house dust mites in bedding and can thus increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Some damp is caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum so reducing the risk of dampness and resultant mould growth.

#### **What is Condensation?**

A family of two adults and two children produces 15 litres of moisture in a day.

The moisture will settle in areas that are cold such as windows, dark corners, walls, tiled areas, concrete floors and toilet cisterns, or behind a wardrobe or cupboard.

It will settle in the coldest of places that have little air circulation and will be more prominent on north facing walls.



#### **Is it Condensation?**

There are several reasons for dampness in your home:

- ▶ Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- ▶ Missing roof tiles
- ▶ Blocked gutters
- ▶ Cracked pipes
- ▶ Penetrating around window frames or through walls
- ▶ Rising damp due to defective or no damp-proof course

If any of these problems is the cause of damp in a property, it will need heat and ventilation to dry out and this could take weeks. It could also require affected area to be re-plastered due to contamination by salts. A dehumidifier will help to speed up the process.

If there is damp in a property that has **not** been caused by any of the above it is likely to be condensation.

## How to Avoid Condensation

### 1. Produce less moisture:

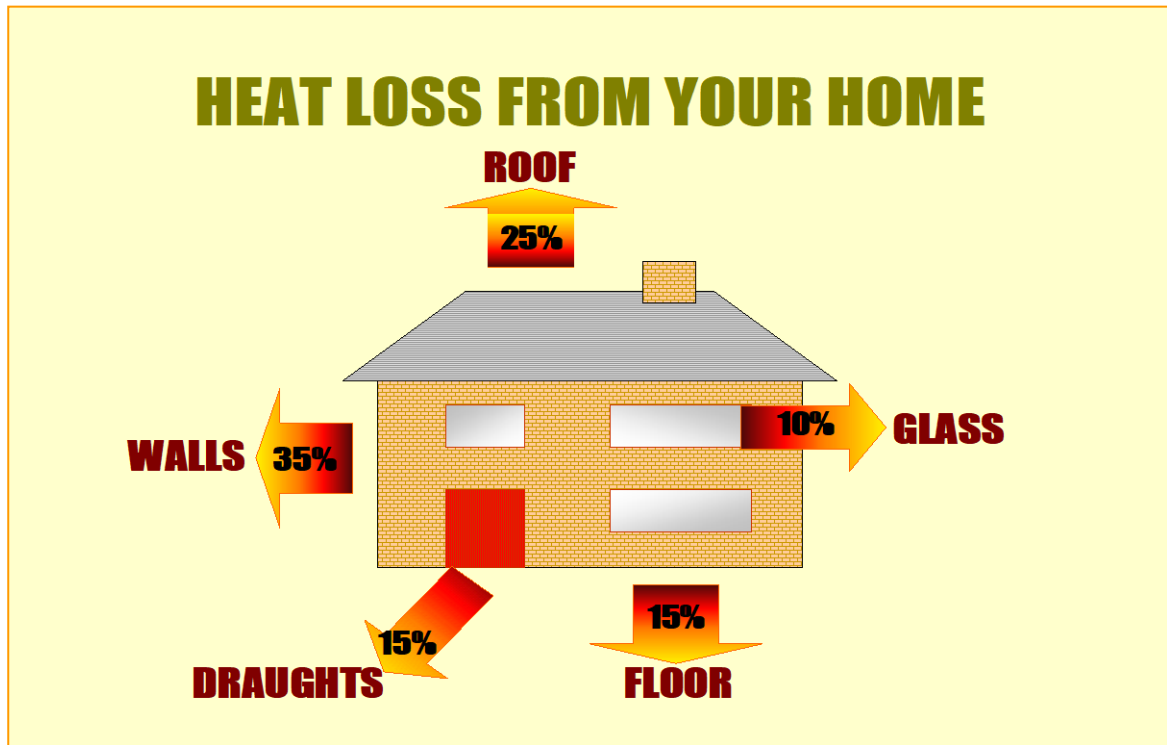
- ▶ When cooking always put lids on pans
- ▶ Do not dry washing on radiators
- ▶ Always vent tumble dryers on the outside, unless it is a self-condensing type
- ▶ If possible do not use paraffin or portable flue-less gas heaters as they produce moisture vapour.

### 2. Ventilate to remove moisture:

- ▶ Keep rooms ventilated by opening a small window or using the secondary secure open position.
- ▶ When cooking open a window in the kitchen and / or use an extractor fan or cooker hood.
- ▶ Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when the rooms are in use to reduce the possibility of moisture escaping to other rooms
- ▶ Make sure that wardrobes and cupboards are ventilated, don't over fill them to allow circulation of air. Leave space between beds, wardrobes and the wall.
- ▶ Replacement windows should have trickle vents and / or a secondary secure opening position which can be left open when out of the house.

### 3. Insulate, draught proof and heat your home:

- ▶ 25% of heat is lost through roofs. Insulate the loft but do not block under the eaves (270mm min). Where sloping ceilings exist insulate these as well.
- ▶ 35% of heat is lost through the walls; cavity wall insulation will keep the home warmer and help to keep down fuel bills.
- ▶ 10% of heat is lost through the floors. Insulate the floors (suspended timber floor) from underneath if possible.
- ▶ Draught proof internal doors ensuring that there is a flow of air particularly if there is a gas fire in use.



## Dealing with mould growth

Mould growth may result from condensation and can be dealt with by following these steps:

- ▶ Ensure that your home is adequately heated and ventilated
- ▶ Avoid 'Peaks & Troughs' in the daily heating cycle which can create conditions likely to cause condensation. Wipe off any condensation that occurs on walls, windows and reveals immediately.
- ▶ Wash mouldy areas with a fungicidal wash
- ▶ Use paint that contains fungicide when re-decorating (avoid wall-papering until situation controlled).
- ▶ Mouldy clothes should be dry-cleaned
- ▶ Affected carpets should be professionally shampooed & dried.
- ▶ Avoid storing wet or damp shoes or coats in enclosed cupboards until dried off.

## Contact details:

### Housing Standards and Assistance

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