

The background features a dense field of water droplets of various sizes, creating a textured, shimmering effect. The color palette is a gradient of blues, from a deep, dark blue at the bottom to a bright, light blue at the top. Overlaid on this are several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes, including triangles and a circle, which intersect and create a complex, layered visual structure.

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CONDENSATION

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Condensation is caused when moisture held in warmer air meets a cold surface like a window or wall and condenses into water droplets. If this happens regularly, mould may start to grow. This usually appears on cold outside walls and surfaces and in places where the air does not circulate well. The moisture created can also damage clothes, furnishings and decoration. It leaves a musty smell.

WHAT CAUSES CONDENSATION?

Condensation usually occurs in winter, because the building is cold and because windows are opened less so moist air cannot escape.

HOW CONDENSATION OCCURS

You can often see condensation for short periods in bathrooms and kitchens because of the steamy atmosphere. Quite frequently it appears for long periods in unheated bedrooms. Sometimes it is in cupboards or corners of rooms where ventilation and movement of air are restricted.

WHEN CONDENSATION OCCURS

All houses are affected by condensation at some time. It usually occurs when a lot of moisture and steam are produced.

For example:

- When cooking
- Having a bath or shower
- Washing clothes
- After a cold night when bedroom windows mist up.

THE MAIN CAUSES OF CONDENSATION ARE

- Using portable paraffin and gas heaters. Each litre of paraffin burned releases one litre of water vapour into the atmosphere. Using bottled gas produces even more water vapour.
- Drying clothes inside the house
- Steam from cooking in the kitchen
- Steam from bathing and washing
- Lack of air circulating in the house
- No ventilation in the house (This can be made worse by too much draught proofing)
- Raising room temperatures suddenly

This can put warm air in contact with cold surfaces increasing the chances of water vapour condensing.

HOW CAN I CUT DOWN CONDENSATION WITHIN MY HOME?

The following steps can reduce and possibly eliminate condensation in your home.

- Do not use portable gas and/or paraffin heaters in your home. If you live in a flat or a maisonette, it is against the conditions of your tenancy to use paraffin heaters or liquid or bottled gas heaters. This is for safety reasons.
- Try not to dry clothes in your home. If this is not practical, keep the door of the room where the clothes are drying closed. Open the windows. This will help prevent moist air circulating in the house.

- When cooking, the kitchen should be ventilated. Use the extractor fan, if you have one, or open a window. Keep the kitchen door closed. This will prevent moist air circulating through the house.
- When bathing or washing, keep the bathroom door closed. Switch on the extractor fan, if you have one. If there is still a lot of water vapour in the atmosphere, leave the fan on, or open the window to disperse the moist air.
- Keep furniture, such as beds, wardrobes etc, clear of the room walls to let air circulate.
- Keep your house warm. This will cut down condensation, as moisture does not condense in warm air. Background heating and ventilation, will also reduce the condensation, especially in winter.

HOW CAN I GET RID OF CONDENSATION OR MOULD?

Following this advice will tackle condensation problems. You may even remove condensation altogether. If condensation occurs, wipe up any moisture with a dry cloth. If you have a problem with mould growth, there are various ways to remove it, but first of all contact your local housing office for advice or an inspection.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAMP AND CONDENSATION?

Damp occurs when a fault in the building's basic structure lets in water from outside. There are basically two types of damp.

- Penetrating Damp
- Rising Damp.

Penetrating damp occurs if water is coming in through the walls or roof, (for example, under a loose roof tile) or through cracks.

Rising damp occurs if there is a problem with the damp proof course. This is a barrier built into floors and walls to stop moisture rising through the house from the ground. The usual evidence of rising damp is a 'tide mark' on the walls that shows how high it has risen. There can also be a musty smell.

If you think that your house is suffering from either rising or penetrating damp, contact your local area housing office.