

# WINTER WORRIES? ... WORRY NO MORE ...

December 2020

## Avoiding condensation in your home

It's the time of year when condensation may become an issue in many homes as temperatures outside drop and windows tend not to be opened so often or for so long. There may also be times when clothes cannot be hung out to dry, which adds to the amount of moisture being created indoors. How can we minimise the problem?

### What is condensation?

Condensation is moisture that can cause rotting window frames, peeling wallpaper and mould on walls, carpets or clothes. It forms on cold surfaces and where there is not much air movement. You might see patches of black mould on windows, in corners, in or behind wardrobes, even on bedding and furnishings. It often forms on north-facing walls, and gets worse in winter. You might also notice a musty smell.



Condensation can encourage mould growth and dust mites, and increase the risk of illnesses like asthma and bronchitis.

### What causes condensation?

There is always moisture in the air, but normally you can't see it. Condensation forms when air gets too full of moisture, or when it cools down quickly on cold surfaces. Condensation 'looks for' cold places: warm, humid air produced by cooking, washing and drying clothes will go to areas like windowpanes, cold walls, and unheated rooms.



Condensation is caused by four things:

1. Producing a lot of moisture – steam in the kitchen and bathroom, drying laundry
2. Not enough ventilation – the moist air can't escape
3. Not enough insulation – the home can't retain heat and has cold surfaces
4. Not enough heating – more water vapour is held in warmer air than cold air

### What can you do to reduce condensation?

#### Produce less moisture

- ★ Cover pans when cooking.
- ★ Dry laundry outdoors if you can, otherwise hang it in a room with the door shut and window open.
- ★ Use the extractor fan if there is one.
- ★ If you use a tumble dryer, vent it to the outside or buy a DIY 'self-condensing' dryer kit.

#### Let the moisture out

- ★ Leave 'trickle' vents open whenever someone is in the room – these are small vents in the frames of modern windows.
- ★ Air rooms that people use regularly, especially bedrooms. A lot of moisture is produced by breathing.
- ★ Use extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens when cooking or drying laundry, and open windows when they steam up.
- ★ Close internal kitchen and bathroom doors when steam is being produced, to stop moisture spreading to the rest of the house.
- ★ Air cupboards and wardrobes, and avoid putting too much in them as this stops air circulating
- ★ Leave a gap between furniture and walls.

#### Heat your home

- ★ Keep temperatures in all of the rooms above 15°C. This will cut down the risk of condensation forming on walls and fabrics (it may still form on windows).





## Emergency Repairs during the festive period



The Emergency Repairs Service number is **01856 873430**. This will put you through to the duty OIC Building Inspector who provides out-of-hours cover for the Association.

**Please ensure you only use this service for actual emergency repairs (and over the Christmas period urgent repairs) as described below. If you use this service for non eligible repairs you will be recharged both the out of hours call (currently £36.00 incl VAT) plus the cost of the contractor attending.**

**Sharing owners are responsible for their own repairs and should be aware that if they use this service they will be recharged.**

### What is classed as **Emergency** or **Urgent** Repairs?

- **Emergency repairs** are necessary where there is an immediate risk to life or limb, serious structural damage to property or security of the property. Examples of emergency situations are:
  - ◊ Major fire damage
  - ◊ Major structural damage to roofs, walls, doors or windows
  - ◊ Burst internal pipes, cylinders or storage tanks
  - ◊ Serious electrical faults
- **Urgent repairs** are those which do not constitute an emergency but where any substantial delay in attending to the repair could cause damage to the property. Examples of urgent repairs are:
  - ◊ Water penetration causing damage to ceilings and/or walls
  - ◊ Broken glass, doors, locks (not lost keys)
  - ◊ Repairs to toilet and cistern (where there is no other toilet in the house)
  - ◊ Failure of heating or hot water systems
  - ◊ Heating repairs in winter

**If you have to use this out of hours service please be sure to let us know when we re-open.**

### Frost Protection

If you are going away please do not leave your home unheated. Ask a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on things and leave the heating on a low setting to avoid pipes freezing.



We suggest you let us know when you are to be away for an extended period and where a key may be obtained in the event of an emergency.

### Have you insured your home contents?



This time of year presents a higher risk of damage from the elements eg, floods and frost. We would like to remind you that it is your responsibility to ensure that your home contents are insured.

The Association can provide you with an application pack for either **SFHA's Diamond Insurance Scheme** or **Thistle Tenant Risks**, both of which offer competitive rates. These can also be found in the Downloads section of our website: [www.ohal.org.uk](http://www.ohal.org.uk).

**BE PREPARED** - have a torch and spare batteries in case of a power cut. Also remember to store trampolines inside and secure wheelie bins to stop them from blowing around.

