

Your guide

to keeping out damp and mould

This leaflet explains how your home can be damaged by damp and mould and what you can do to help prevent it.

If your home is damp it can cause mould on your walls and furniture and rot wooden window frames. Not only this, but damp homes encourage mites and can increase the risk of respiratory illness.

There is always some moisture in the air, and when the air gets colder it can't hold all the moisture and tiny droplets of water appear. This is condensation, and it is a major cause of damp. You may have noticed it when you breathe on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you run a bath. It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little air movement, so you should check in corners, on or around windows and behind wardrobes and cupboards. Sometimes there is a musty smell.

Although condensation is a major cause of damp, it can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain getting through holes in roofs, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames or leaking through a cracked pipe
- Rising damp because of a faulty damp course
- If your home is newly built it could be damp because water used during its construction (in plaster, for example) is still drying out.

If your home is damp for any of these reasons one of our surveyors will visit and arrange for repairs to be carried out.

Insulation and draught proofing

Insulation and draught proofing will help keep your home warm and cut fuel bills. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely. Most L&Q homes have had the following insulation and double glazing works carried out:

- Loft insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Double or secondary glazing

If you don't think insulation has been provided please contact us and a surveyor will come and carry out an inspection.

Heat your home

In cold weather, keep low background heating on all day, even when no one is at home. L&Q appreciate that heating your home can be costly and that keeping heating on when you are out could appear wasteful, but if it is at a low level the boiler will not have to work as hard to reheat the home.

Treatment of mould

Where there is mould you can treat it very easily. To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash, following the instructions precisely. These are available from most supermarkets. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.

It is not a good idea to disturb mould by brushing or vacuuming as this can increase the risk of respiratory problems.

After washing down surfaces as described above, they can be painted with a good quality fungicidal paint. A few words of warning:

- Don't block permanent wall ventilators in rooms
- Don't completely block chimneys
- If there is a louvered grill do not cover it
- Don't draught proof rooms where there is condensation or mould
- Don't draught proof rooms where there is a cooker or fuel burning heater
- Don't draught proof windows in the bathroom or kitchen

How can you avoid damp and condensation?

Produce less moisture:

- Cover pans when cooking and don't leave kettles boiling
- Do not use paraffin or calor gas heaters as these put a lot of moisture the air (please note, it is a tenant agreement that you are not allowed to use oil, paraffin, or bottled gas heaters in your home)
- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or in the bathroom with the door closed and a window open or extractor fan on
- Vent tumble dryers directly to the outside
- Switch on extractor fans where you have them

Ventilate to remove moisture:

- Keep a small window ajar or trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening windows

- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes and avoid filling them too much, as this prevents air circulating. Using slatted shelves and/or having breather holes put in the of wardrobes helps. Leaving a space between wardrobes and walls also helps.
- If windows are replaced, L&Q will ensure that they incorporate trickle ventilators, as appropriate.

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