

Centacare Evolve Housing Fact Sheet

Damp, Condensation and Mould

Tasmanian winters are sometimes cold and severe, resulting in problems with condensation and mould growth in your home. Condensation and mould can occur on any surface, look unpleasant and can increase the risk of respiratory illness. Mould is usually black but can be other colours including greens, yellows, pink, grey or white. ***Ensuring your home is free of mould and mildew is one of your responsibilities as a tenant.***



What causes damp, condensation and mould?






Condensation starts off as moisture in the air, usually produced by cooking, washing or drying clothes indoors. When damp air comes in contact with cold surfaces, such as mirrors, walls, wall tiles and windows, it condenses and forms water droplets. In general you and your activities in your home cause the moisture/condensation. The damp air rises when it is warm and often ends up on ceilings, walls and behind free standing furniture such as wardrobes and drawers. If the surfaces are not dried and aired regularly, mould growth will occur.

Why is a problem?

Left untreated, condensation can result in mould growth on walls, ceilings, furniture, furnishings, and clothing in cupboards and drawers. High humidity has a cumulative effect in absorbing materials, such as clothing hanging in wardrobes or bed clothes making them damp. If these items are not dried, mould will develop. It can also affect plaster and cause woodwork to rot.

Mould cannot grow if dry air is circulating, so it may be necessary to move free standing wardrobes and beds away from the walls to allow ventilation. Stacking goods against outside walls should be avoided, particularly on walls that do not get natural light.

In a single day you can produce:

Activities	Moisture/condensation
 Breathing (asleep)	0.30 Litre (per person)
 Breathing (awake)	0.85 Litre (per person)
 Cooking	3 Litre
 Shower, bath	1.0 Litre
 Drying Clothes	5.5 Litre

A simple test for condensation

If you want to work out if condensation is a problem in your home, here's a simple test you can try:

1. Take a bottle of juice or other drink out of your fridge.
2. Wipe it clean with a dry cloth.
3. Put it in the room where you think there is a problem with condensation.
4. See if water droplets form on the outside of the bottle. If there are droplets it means that there is a lot of condensation.

What can you do about damp, condensation and mould?

The best thing you can do is prevent the problem from happening. A dry, well-aired home is easier to heat and healthier for you and your family. You can minimise the amount of moisture and condensation in your home by doing the following:

- open doors and windows when you can while you are home
- open windows or use an extractor fan when you are:
 - cooking
 - using the shower or bath
 - using a clothes dryer - wipe condensation off ceilings, walls and windows or hang washing outside to dry
- keep your home warm when you can
- make sure clothes and shoes are dry before putting them away
- clean up leaks or spills straight away
- don't use an un-flued gas heater that has a bottle – this type of heater creates a lot of moisture and is very unsafe to use
- allow some space between your furniture and the wall so that air can flow – this is very important with wardrobes
- try not to stack boxes or other items against outside walls, especially walls that don't get a lot of sun.

How can you get rid of mould?

The longer you leave mould, the worse it becomes. It's a good idea to get rid of it as soon as you can. Here are some inexpensive and practical products to use to kill mould:

- **Tea tree oil** – mix one teaspoon of oil into one cup of water in a spray bottle. Spray the mould but don't rinse it off. You can store the tea tree oil mixture and use it anytime you notice mould in your home.
- **Grapefruit seed extract** – mix 10 drops to one cup of water in a spray bottle. Spray the mould but don't rinse it off. Like the tea tree oil, you can store this mixture and use it anytime you notice mould in your home. A good thing about this mixture is that it will not smell.

- **White vinegar** – put the vinegar into a spray bottle and spray it straight onto the problem areas. Don't rinse it off. The smell will go away after a while.
- **Household diluted bleach** – mix one cup of bleach with three cups of water and wipe onto the walls. Make sure you wear gloves and keep the windows open to air the fumes. Don't scrub with bleach because you may damage the paint or the plaster.

Another tip is to use absorbent beads in the room. These are sold in the supermarket and hardware stores and they usually come in a specially designed container. They soak up any extra moisture in the room. While they won't get rid of the mould, they will help to prevent the problem in future.

More information

If you would like further information about your responsibilities as a Centacare Evolve Housing tenant please refer to your Lease or contact us.