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SEVERE CONDENSATION PROBLEMS, CONDENSATION & DAMPNES

Secondary Glazing for Condensation

We apologise in advance for the length of this section!
However, if you have arrived here - you may now be at the end of a long search for answers!

If your property is *genuinely & only suffering from "normal" condensation* - then a combination of the measures detailed on the website and in the **How to Control, Reduce & Eliminate Condensation** download should resolve the problem.

However, severe condensation problems, resulting in *general dampness*, black mould growth & a nasty, "musty" smell:

- may be indicative of *underlying defects in the structure and/or the fabric* of the property
- alternatively, especially if the problem is *localised rather than widespread*, then the problem is probably being caused by *severe condensation*

These types of severe condensation &/or dampness problems can only be dealt with by:

- identifying
- treating
- eliminating

the underlying causes.

Once that is done, you will then need to repair any damage done to the plasterwork, woodwork or decoration, remove any mould growth and treat affected areas to prevent any re-infestation.

The Signs of Severe Problem Condensation & Dampness

Some condensation *is* normal, especially during cold, damp weather and when producing lots of moisture when cooking, bathing or showering or doing the laundry, etc.

What is not "normal," is year-round condensation, or condensation & dampness that occurs when a property is well heated, reasonably insulated & adequately ventilated.

If your property is suffering from really excessive condensation & general dampness, then the problem could be caused by rising or penetrating damp.

There are some classic indications:

1. condensation does not leave a "tidemark" on walls - rising or penetrating damp usually does
2. condensation does not normally cause wallpaper to lift or curl at the edges - rising or penetrating damp will
3. condensation does not cause paintwork on walls to bubble or blister - penetrating or rising damp does
4. condensation will not normally appear on walls that are internal to the property (walls dividing rooms) rising and penetrating damp can do
5. normal condensation will not usually get onto carpets or into wardrobes or cupboards - severe condensation &/or damp can
6. condensation will not normally get onto furniture - unless it is against a very cold external wall or room corner - the excess moisture from rising or penetrating damp can

7. normal condensation will not normally cause mould growth, severe condensation &/or damp can
8. condensation will not cause *upper* sections of window frames to rot - water penetration can

The Causes of Condensation & Dampness Problems

Dampness and the resulting excessive condensation can be caused by a single defect or by a combination of several defects.

It can also start in a property that did not previously suffer from it when changes to the structure are made or a new defect occurs.

In older (pre-circa 1900) properties that have been subject to poor maintenance &/or inappropriate "improvements," condensation & dampness is often the result - which then speeds up the further deterioration of the fabric of the building.

So, if your property is suffering from severe condensation and dampness problems, it will pay you to thoroughly investigate all of the potential causes:

Possible Structural Defects:

- tightly sealed windows & doors without trickle or other adequate ventilation
- sealed up air bricks
- sealed up eaves in roofs
- sealed up chimney place openings
- penetrating damp - from a leaking pipe within walls, ceilings or floors
- rising damp - from a non-existent Damp Proof Course (DPC) in a very old property
- rising damp - from a perished or damaged DPC
- penetrating damp - from a non-existent Damp Proof Membrane (DPM) in a solid floor in a property
- penetrating damp - from a perished or damaged DPM
- failure of the extraction system in a bathroom (often in modern apartment blocks) that does not have an outside window
- failure or absence of damp insulation & through-ventilation to a cellar or basement
- damaged or blocked rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes & hoppers) allowing rainwater to penetrate walls
- damaged or blocked wastes from sinks, baths, showers or plumbed-in washing machines
- rainwater penetration around window frames
- rainwater penetration from missing or damaged roof slates, tiles or lead-flashing
- rainwater penetration from damaged flat roofs
- outside levels of earth, cement or paving adjoining the property walls, are higher than the DPC - causing penetrating damp during wet weather
- thick vegetation (climbers, shrubs) on outside walls
- failure of the cement pointing to external walls
- damaged rendering on external walls allowing rainwater ingress & condensation build-up that penetrates internally
- there is growing evidence that pre-1980's houses retro-fitted with blown glass or mineral fibre type

cavity wall insulation allow wind driven rain (which will naturally enter via the mortar lines of the outer

brick skin) to saturate the insulation material & then penetrate through the insulation & into the inside brick wall, causing very severe dampness & mould growth - this is particularly a problem on very exposed walls such as in coastal areas

Changes to the Property:

- newly installed shower, Jacuzzi or sauna without sufficient additional ventilation
- newly installed hot air central heating system
- non-vented tumble dryer introduced
- an adjoining property with party-wall has become vacant, unheated & damp
- newly installed non-vented gas fire
- new building works - an extension for example, or renewal of a solid cement floor - the cement, plaster & other materials will contain a lot of moisture & will require additional heating & ventilation during the first winter to dry out
- newly constructed properties - the cement, plaster & other materials will contain a lot of moisture & will require additional heating & ventilation during the first winter to dry out
- newly constructed properties - with flat concrete roofs - the cement will only be able to dry inwards & will therefore require additional heating & ventilation during the first winter to dry out - additionally, any ceiling finish that would prevent or obstruct the drying process must not be added until the drying process is complete
- some "roof sealing" treatments - that seal the outside of tiled or slate roofs, do not provide sufficient ventilation

Black Mould Growth

It is essential to identify and remedy the underlying problems *before* tackling the black mould growth.

Once you have done this, take the following steps:

1. remove damaged wallpaper
2. strip bubbled, blistered and damaged paintwork
3. wipe down affected areas, walls and window frames, with a proprietary anti-fungal wash
4. shampoo any affected carpets
5. re-paint using proprietary ant-fungal paints

Finally, especially if it is winter and the problems have been severe:

- hire a dehumidifier for a few months to assist the drying out process

We hope that this information helps you to identify & successfully cure condensation & damp problems in your home.