

CONDENSATION

Why it happens.
How to prevent it.



Because the little things matter

Condensation. It's a fact of life.

The air we breathe, the gas flame under a kettle, a hot morning shower, they all add moisture to the atmosphere. And when warm, moist air hits a cold surface? That's when you get condensation.

It's a well-known threat in a holiday home, and one that needs to be taken seriously. Excess moisture can gather to result in mould, mildew, musty smells, rust and wall panel discolouration or deformation.

Repairs and replacements can be costly - so, as with most things, prevention is better than cure.

We'll tell you how to keep moisture in the atmosphere to an acceptable level. It's a simple set of guidelines which, if followed regularly, will keep the curse of condensation at bay and leave your holiday home comfortable and dry.

Still air is your enemy

Your single biggest asset in the war on condensation is good ventilation. No matter what further steps you take, if the flow of air through your holiday home is poor, moisture will inevitably collect.

At the design and manufacture stage, we've already begun to address the issue. You'll see fixed ventilation points all round your holiday home, and it's important to make sure that these are never blocked.

The next weapons in your armoury are your windows and roof vents. Damp air loves them in the closed position - so leave them open as often as you can.

As a good rule of thumb, if you're in, keep something open.

Whenever you occupy your holiday home during the day, and especially through the night, keeping windows slightly ajar (use the night-latch setting) is invaluable.

You won't feel a breeze, but you can sleep soundly knowing you won't wake up to trickles down the windows and puddles on the sills.

Easy everyday tips

It's simple to build these things into your day-to-day life so that condensation control becomes a matter of routine.

- When showering, always keep the door closed and use the extractor.
- Burning gas creates moisture, so don't use gas heaters or hobs excessively.
- Keep lids on saucepans when cooking.
- Dry and air clothes outside whenever possible, and in a room with the window open when not.
- Having your heating on a lower setting over a longer time is better than blasting it out on full, which can leave cold spots where condensation may collect.

A little extra help

If you have your ventilation under control, but still find condensation a problem, here are some other techniques to try.

Many people find electric dehumidifiers invaluable. A centrally-placed unit will draw in air from all corners of your holiday home, remove some of the water vapour, and re-circulate the dryer air. The machine can be plumbed in for drainage, or you can choose a model with a removable water tank to empty. Running costs can be around the 1p-2p per hour level, so even lengthy use is quite economical.

Double glazing can be a worthwhile investment. The dual-layer construction means windows that are warmer to the touch, so one of the main trouble spots where condensation gathers is less prone to creating moisture.

Containers of salt or silica gel will remove moisture from the air. However, they need to be replaced frequently since, once the substance is saturated, they start to add dampness to the atmosphere rather than remove it.

When you're away from your holiday home

When you're away from your holiday home for an extended period of time - say two weeks or more - here are the steps you'll need to take to make sure that condensation doesn't cause problems for your return.

- Open windows wide for a good airing before you leave.
- Open every door to every room, wardrobe and cupboard, and pull out all the drawers a little, then leave them open to allow air to circulate as widely as possible.
- Where furniture can be moved, shift it away from the walls.
- It's best to remove bedding altogether.
- Consider removing curtains and nets.
- Stand mattresses and sofa cushions on edge, away from the walls, to expose as much of the surface as possible to the air.
- Roll up rugs and leave them standing on end.
- Double-check that all air vents are clear.
- Leave a few containers of salt or silica gel around.
- Salt and silica gel needs to be regularly checked so it does not become saturated.

