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INFORMATION REGARDING DAMP CONDENSATION

Dear Tenant,

The following information on **DAMP** and **CONDENSATION** has been produced for your benefit in an attempt to give you a basic understanding of what causes damp and condensation and what you can do to help to **CONTROL** the effects of damp and condensation.

I would like to start by saying that condensation is a perfectly natural process that is continually happening every day and all the time. When you see "Black mould growth" inside your property do not jump to the conclusion that your property "**suffers with damp**". The expression "Damp in a Property" is more usually and correctly meant to be "**RISING DAMP**" or "**PENETRATING DAMP**"

RISING DAMP:

This is where moisture comes up through the earth, through the brickwork and finally through any ground floor timbers or concrete flooring (i.e. **it rises**). Rising damp will only occur on the ground floor and usually only up to a maximum height of 1 metre or 3 foot. You should not have any rising damp in your property and if you have it means that the damp proof barrier or damp proof course (D.P.C.) will have failed to your property. This is a **VERY SERIOUS** condition as it can cause a lot of damage to the property, and be prejudicial to the health of the occupants.

One of the key ways to spot rising damp is that you can actually see a "**stained water tide mark**" on the wall; it looks a bit like a dried tea stain. If the area has "cloudy black marks" then it's probably **NOT RISING DAMP**.

PENETRATING DAMP:

This is where moisture enters the property from the outside (i.e. **it penetrates**). You should not have any form of penetrating damp in your property and if you have it could be attributable to one of the following causes.

- (a) A defective roof i.e. Loose or slipped slate or tile/ Defective lead flashings.
- (b) Open mortar joints on your brickwork.
- (c) Gutters or drains that are blocked up.
- (d) Badly fitted windows with perished seals.
- (e) Broken rain water pipes or soil pipes.
- (f) Rubbish or garden wastes or other goods that have been banked against the wall of your property.

If you have penetrating damp then it is a very serious condition as it can cause a lot of damage to the property and be prejudicial to the health of the occupants. One of the main ways to spot penetrating damp is that you can actually see a "stained water tide mark" on the wall; it looks a bit like a dried tea stain. If the area has "cloudy black marks" then it's probably **NOT PENETRATING DAMP**.

CONDENSATION:

By “being in the property” and “Living in the property”

YOU WILL CAUSE CONDENSATION TO OCCUR IN THE PROPERTY!

Condensation occurs when air that is carrying high levels of moisture meets a cooler medium. For example when you are in your warm house and you breathe out you cannot see your breath, but if you go outside when it's cold or on a cold night and then you breathe out, you will see clouds or puffs of your exhaled air. This is water that was in the air that came up from your lungs that has now condensed into **WATER VAPOUR**.

Clouds, fog and a mist are all water vapour, this is a traditional stage of condensation, when the AMBIENT temperature is sufficiently reduced then this water vapour will meet what is called its “**DEW POINT**” it is at this point that the water vapour will return to its original state i.e. PLAIN WATER. (DISTILLED WATER at that i.e. a pure water)

This is where condensation problems in properties occur, because we can not control where this water vapour will condense to inside a property. What we can do is to try to reduce the amount of moisture in the air or more importantly to **REDUCE** the amount of condensation.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE HIGH MOISTURE LEVELS IN YOUR PROPERTY?

- (1) One of the things we can do to reduce condensation is **NOT TO DRY WET CLOTHES OR WET TOWELS INSIDE THE PROPERTY** especially over radiators. This is the number one cause of condensation in a home. You should only ever dry clothes in a special laundry room that is extremely well ventilated to the outside of the property. Think about the maths of it wet/damp clothes drying inside your house = Warm damp humid air that condenses where you don't want it to.

Put your wet clothes inside your tumble dryer or better still dry them outside.

- (2) If you are having a bath or shower, then by simply opening your bathroom window this will greatly reduce the high levels of moisture. Leave the window open and your door shut for at least 5 minutes after you have had your bath, so that a “**full and complete**” air change takes place.
- (3) If you are cooking in your kitchen then by simply opening your kitchen window this will greatly reduce the high levels of moisture produced, please remember to put a lid on any cooking utensils as this will help with your cooking and prevent excess moisture being displaced into the room. Leave the window open and your door shut for at least 5 minutes after you have finished cooking, so that a “**full and complete**” air change takes place.
- (4) As part of your everyday lifestyle you should at least once a day open the window to your bedroom/ Living room so that a “**full and complete**” air change can take place. You should try to keep the window open for at least 1 hour every day. This is important so that the moisture laden air can escape to the outside. **Please note that most PVC windows can be opened by about the thickness of your finger (15mm) and then have the handle relocked in that open position, this means that the window is securely locked in the open position and will allow a constant air flow. You may also have trickle vents fitted directly into the top of your PVC window frame and these can be switched between open and close.**
- (5) If you have window ventilators and extractor fans in the bathroom or kitchen, then please use them this will enable a “**full and complete**” air change to take place and for the moisture and damp air to be replaced.
- (6) Keep your property warm, as this will help to avoid the moist air condensing before the air changes take place.
- (7) You will notice that a lot of condensation will occur on or around your window. This is the ideal place for warm moist air to crash against, be cooled then condensed into pools of water on your window sill. **(Warm air or heat will always travel to the colder area)** By keeping any

curtains drawn you will be creating an extra thermal barrier to stop the above from happening as easily. An extremely helpful and beneficial action is to place an old towel or series of sponges on the window ledge so that its soaks up the puddles of condensed water which you can ring out into your toilet or wash basin. By collecting this water you are stopping it from causing damage and from being recycled **back** into the room environment as evaporated water.

- (8) You could if you wanted to buy a **DEHUMIDIFIER**. This is a machine that will filter your moist air and mechanically condense it through a cooling filter so that the condensed water can be collected and emptied into the sink or toilet etc.
- (9) You will notice also, that condensation usually occurs on the walls of a room that are the outside walls of a property, this is because they are the **coldest** walls in a house and these cold walls facilitate the condensation process. It is a very good idea to slightly pull away from the wall any large items furniture, as these items of furniture will stop the free circulation of warm air that will help to keep these cold walls warm, and reduce condensation, until such time as a "**full and complete**" air change can take place which will replace the moisture laden air.
- (10) If you have a gas fire then this is a great way to help reduce the high moisture levels. This is because the hot flue gases go up the chimney to the outside air, at the same time that this is happening; it causes a cyclical effect whereby "new fresh air" is drawn in from the outside through either dedicated air vents or adventitious air from gaps or natural openings in the fabric of the building. The secret here is that the gas fire uses up the moist air for its combustion process and as it expels its waste gases, so to does it expel the moisture that was in that air. This is why the air in a room can be very dry if you use a gas fire or coal fire for a long period.

GENERAL:

The introduction of FIRE DOORS has greatly exasperated the problems of condensation; this is because they are nearly always CLOSED! And they also have a brush fire and smoke strip along the head of the door and down the sides. This hugely stops the free circulation of air throughout a property and hence the high moisture levels in various rooms are effectively "locked in." This makes it all the more important that you take note of the above points.

In a nutshell the most important thing you can do to protect yourself **AND THE LANDLORDS PROPERTY** from condensation is

VENTILATION, VENTILATION, VENTILATION!!!!

It is in your tenancy agreement that you are not allowed to dry clothes other than in a tumble dryer or in a ventilated laundry room and it will be viewed by the landlord as vandalism and destruction of the landlord's property if you fail to do this. If damage is caused by the above the Landlord reserves the right to issue the Tenant with a **Notice to Quit** your tenancy and even sue you for damage to his property.

I do hope these notes prove useful to you.

Yours Faithfully

James M Skelton