

Window Condensation

What Is Condensation?

Moisture on windows is called condensation. Condensation is formed when warm moist air meets a cooler drier air, much like breathing on a mirror. The inside or outside of your window can sweat or fog due to these temperature changes. Glass is usually the first place you notice this condensation as it is generally the lowest temperature point in the house.

What Causes Condensation?

Faulty windows do not cause condensation, the moisture in the air causes condensation. The reason you may see more condensation in your home is due to the modern energy efficient homebuilding techniques and products available to the building trade as a standard. The insulation and construction materials used today are designed to keep cold air outside. While these materials and weather stripping keep cold air outside, they also keep warm moist air inside. Older window designs and materials were less efficient, and consequently allowed moisture to escape. If you didn't have as much condensation before replacing your old windows, it's probably because they were draughty. Good windows and insulation all create barriers to the air exchange of a home, the result is excess moisture and a high relative indoor humidity level.

How Can I Fix This?

The key lies in controlling the humidity inside your home.

Steps you can take to achieve this are:

- Opening a window or door daily to ventilate the house
- Opening blinds or curtains to allow air to circulate against windows
- Turning off any humidifying devices in your house
- Installing and using a dehumidifier
- Keeping plants in a sunroom, or in rooms that are infrequently used during extreme cold weather
- Adding waterproofing protection to basement floors and walls
- Make sure open-faced gas heaters are connected to a chimney and use them as little as possible

Window condensation should only occur during extreme temperature differences and should be of a small amount. During winter condensation will be seen on the inside of the window, during the summer it is seen on the outside. If condensation is found between the two layers of glass in a sealed unit, the airtight seal has broken and this will require a replacement unit. If your house has too much moisture, there will be evidence all year round. Moisture spots on ceilings or walls, peeling paint, rotting wood or delaminating plywood, moisture on exterior walls, mould or mildew growth are signs of a more serious damp problem. Should you encounter any of these symptoms, an expert heating and cooling contractor should be contacted to solve your problem.