



Condensation Causes Mold

What is condensation and why does it occur?

The air in your condo naturally contains moisture. This invisible moisture allows you to live comfortably in your unit. The moisture can become a problem if condensation occurs on surfaces in your condo. This occurs most commonly on windows during the winter because the windows are colder than the air temperature in your condo. Cold air cannot hold as much water or moisture as warm air. As warm air in your unit moves toward the windows the air cools. The moisture that was once invisible in the warmer air condenses on the colder window and is seen as tiny water droplets.

You may notice that condensation primarily occurs around the edges of the interior pane of glass in your window. This is because the metal frame around the window is conducting cold from outside, cooling the edges of the window pane and leaving the middle of the pane warm. These cooler edges are normal and not considered a defect in the window materials or installation.

Where does the moisture in my condo come from?

You produce moisture simply by breathing and perspiring but many of your daily activities will also increase the amount of moisture in your home. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, dishwashing, bathing and keeping house plants all contribute to increased amounts of moisture.

How can I eliminate the condensation in my unit?



Here is a list of things you can do to reduce condensation in your unit:

1. Moisture reduction

- Do not hang clothes to dry in-doors. Regularly clean the lint trap in your dryer.
- Do not use a humidifier. Run a dehumidifier if necessary.
- Cover all pots and pans with lids while cooking.
- Run only full loads of dishes in your dishwasher and use the drying setting.
- Have shorter, cooler showers.
- Limit the number of plants you keep in your unit.

2. Increase Air Circulation

- Make sure that your window coverings are open during the day so that air can move over the surface of the window.
- Hang window coverings to allow for adequate space between the coverings and the window surface. This ensures that even when the window coverings are closed air can still circulate between the covering and the surface of the glass.
- Make sure the windowsill is clear of objects.
- Keep doors to all rooms open to allow even circulation of air throughout the unit. (Except bathroom doors when bathing, see below).



3. Increase Ventilation

- Use kitchen exhaust fans while cooking especially when boiling or steaming foods.
- Run the bathroom fan during and at least 20 minutes after your shower to vent the remaining steam. Do this with the bathroom door closed. Note that not all bathrooms have an exhaust fan with a motor.
- Clean exhaust vents and grates and lint traps regularly.

Ventilation



Exhaust Fans

The range hood and exhaust fans, provided in the kitchen and bathrooms, respectively, should be used to remove lingering odors and excess moisture in the air which can cause condensation.

If there is more than one bathroom, there is one exhaust fan motor with a switch for the fan in each bathroom. The fan can be turned on and off in each bathroom. Your kitchen fan should be used whenever cooking on the stove to avoid lingering odors and to lessen grease build up on kitchen surfaces. Air is vented to the exterior of the building. The filter should be cleaned periodically following the instructions outlined in the appliance manual.

Corridor Air

As you will notice, there is a gap around the door jamb of your suite entry door. This gap is not a deficiency. **We recommend that you do not install any type of weather stripping around the suite entry door.** This gap serves as one of the only sources of fresh air and helps maintain the air circulation in your suite, which in turn assists in preventing condensation.

The corridor air also serves as a safety feature in the event of fire. If a fire occurs in the building, the corridor fresh air units are immediately disabled, so that the smoke does not enter into the suite.

The relative humidity in your unit can also be lowered by reducing heating temperature, utilizing a dehumidifier, and leaving an opening in the window. Vigilance in cleaning the affected areas will minimize any health effects and damage to your unit.

Summary

Mold is controllable and preventable; it is not subject to combustion and not covered by insurance policies as a peril. The role of the owner as outlined by the Condominium Authority of Ontario (CAO) highlights the role of home ownership to include maintenance of their unit.

Maintaining the level of relative humidity, ventilation and condensation is the role of the owner not the condominium's responsibility.