



Condensation and Your Home's Windows

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Just as a mirror isn't the cause of condensation in your bathroom after a hot shower, your windows aren't to blame for condensation in your home; they are just the most visible place to see its presence. There are primarily three sources of temporary window condensation.

Heating Season: At the beginning of the heating season, there may be a certain amount of temporary condensation. During the humid summer months, your house can absorb some moisture. After the first few weeks of heating, this moisture should dissipate.

Preceding Temperature Shifts: Sharp, quick drops in temperature can also create temporary condensation problems during the heating season.

New Construction: Wood, plaster, cement and other building materials used in new construction and remodeling produce a great deal of moisture. When the heating season starts, this moisture will gradually flow out into the air in the home. It will usually disappear during the first heating season and not cause any further trouble.

Replacement Windows: When windows are replaced they seal your home and significantly decrease air infiltration. The air infiltration rate of your old windows kept the humidity lower.

So, as outlined above, condensation on your window's interior glass is, in most cases caused by excess humidity in the home. Most common in winter, this temporary occurrence could be a warning sign that humidity is damaging your home, and more importantly, affecting your health. Years ago it was thought the addition of humidity during the winter months was good for the home, and good for the home's occupants. Recent studies* contradict this concept. In fact, too much humidity in the home can allow mold and mildew to thrive, causing unsafe air quality. This same moisture can also cause deteriorating damage to the home's insulation, walls, wood floors and even the foundation.

Maximum Recommended Humidity Levels:

Outside Air Temperature	Inside Relative Humidity
-20° F or Below	Not over 15%
-20° F to -10° F	Not over 20%
-10° F to 0° F	Not over 25%
0° F to 10° F	Not over 30%
10° F to 20° F	Not over 35%
20° F to 40° F	Not over 40%

Source: Minnesota Building Industry Foundation

- Relative humidity levels above these are not recommended at the low outside temperatures indicated, unless special provisions are taken in building construction.
- If higher relative humidity levels are required because of special interior environmental conditions, the window manufacturer should be consulted.

*Engineering studies based on a 70°F interior room temperature conducted by the University of Minnesota.