

Avoid moisture, mold and mildew problems.

Excess moisture in your home can affect energy efficiency and lead to mold, mildew, wood rot, water damage and other problems.

Symptoms of excess indoor moisture

- Condensation: In a poorly insulated home, water may condense on cold interior windows, walls, floors and/or ceiling surfaces, leading to mold growth.
- Allergic reactions: Fungi that cause mold, mildew and dry rot can also cause respiratory problems.
- Stains: Mold and mildew can cause unsightly discoloration and damage to walls, ceilings and floors.
- Odors: Excess indoor moisture can result in a persistent musty smell.
- Discomfort: Too-humid indoor air doesn't feel good.

How excess moisture gets into your home

- Water leaks in roof, foundation or plumbing; sometimes leaks are easy to spot.
- Air leaks in winter drive moist indoor air into building cavities, leading to fungal growth including wood rot and mold.

Indoor sources of moisture

- Cooking
- House plants
- Cleaning
- Breathing
- Bathing

Exterior sources of moisture

- Blocked gutters
- Downspouts not directed away from house
- Wood in contact with soil
- Yard sloping toward house

Steps to control indoor moisture

- Repair leaks in a roof, foundation or plumbing immediately.
- Make sure that gutter downspouts or rooflines discharge water away from home and foundation.
- Weatherize: Add recommended insulation, caulking, weatherstripping and ventilation.

- Install ground cover: If your home has a crawl space, cover exposed earth with plastic vapor barrier that's at least six-mils thick .
- Use kitchen and bath exhaust fans. Choose low-noise fans (the quietest are rated 1.0 sones or less) with back draft dampers. A kitchen exhaust fan should expel at least 120 cubic feet per minute (CFM) of air. A bath fan should expel a minimum 80 CFM. Increase exhausted air CFM by 40 percent simply by replacing a 3-inch flexible exhaust duct with a 4" metal duct.
- Vent kitchen, bath, clothes dryer and other exhaust fans outside. Do not vent them into an attic, crawl space, garage or anywhere moisture could be a problem.
- Control indoor water vapor sources by reducing the length you take showers, boil water or run a decorative fountain. Cover aquariums.
- Measure indoor humidity. In winter, 40 to 50 percent indoor humidity is best.
- A dehumidifier can remove up to 40 pints of water a day from indoor air! Regularly drain the excess moisture outside or plumb to a drain.
- Don't store unseasoned firewood, or hang clothes to dry indoors.

For more information on managing home costs and how to get rebates and tax credits for making your home more energy efficient, call one of PGE's home energy experts, Monday – Friday at 503-612-3500. Or reach us online at PortlandGeneral.com/Energy.

