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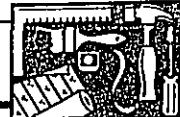
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# Dehumidify

## Inside moisture must be reduced

By Andy Lang  
AP Newsfeatures

When air contains all the moisture it can hold, it is said to be saturated. What is called the relative humidity is then at 100 percent.

Excessive moisture in your house causes all sorts of problems if it is not permitted to escape to the outside. The escape route can be one or more of several ways, but not through the outside walls. When that occurs, the most common result is the peeling of exterior paint.

Vapor barriers are used to prevent the moisture from reaching the paint film, but the condensation that takes place between the inside and outside walls can be avoided by the use of vents which allow the moist air to leave the house. Such vents should be covered with screening to keep out insects.

Condensation is the result of warm, moist air settling on a cool surface. That's why you get condensation on windows, cold water pipes, toilet tanks and even a glass of ice water. Either the excessive moisture in the house should be diminished or the surfaces on which it condenses should be made warmer.

To reduce the moisture in a house means controlling the sources that produce it. Water vapor enters the air from such things as bathing, showering, washing dishes, cooking and even by breathing.

The way to control its volume is by ventilation, either in the form of one or more exhaust fans or just a simple little thing like keeping a window open a little when engaging in any activity that produces moisture.

A dehumidifier can help by capturing some of the vapor before it does any damage.

When condensation does occur, be sure some of the moisture isn't coming from your humidifier.

If your house has a crawl space under it, excessive moisture may be coming out of the ground and entering the structure.

Be sure the space is vented, then cover the ground with polyethylene sheets or something similar. Use sand to hold down the sheets at overlapping seams. If the ground cover proves to be very effective, the vents around the crawl space sometimes can be closed during cold weather.

What may appear to be a leak in the area of the toilet tanks is usually condensation. Some people find a simple solution is a fabric covering around the tank and other parts of the fixture.

This covering prevents the moist air from coming into contact with the tank. Such covers are available in different sizes, colors and styles. Care must be exercised to see the covering does not interfere with the flushing mechanism and the toilet seat.

Another way to handle the situation is with a Styrofoam kit that contains the necessary adhesive and instructions for cutting the material to fit the inside of the tank.

To make this work, you will have to dry out the tank so the adhesive can adhere properly. The Styrofoam prevents the outside of the tank from getting cold, since it serves as a barrier between the water and the inside of the tank.

A neighbor had his plumber install a mixing valve underneath the tank to keep the water in the tank slightly warm.

In a discussion about the subject some time later, another neighbor reported little luck with this method. Should you decide to utilize it, ask your plumber if he has done it in the past and what the results were.

Cold water pipes that sweat and drip can be kept from getting the condensation that is causing the trouble by wrapping the pipes with a special tape.

Some experts recommend using this kind of covering on the hot water pipes as well as the cold. It reduces the amount of energy needed to maintain water temperatures at the desired level.

If your house has a concrete floor slab, moisture on the edge of the slab usually means the slab edge and foundation are not properly insulated, which causes the slab to lose heat to the outside and get cold. Insulation then can be added to the slab edge outside the foundation.

*Do-it-yourselfers will find much helpful information on a variety of subjects in Andy Lang's handbook, "Practical Home Repairs," which can be obtained by sending \$3 to P.O. Box 1055, Brick, New Jersey 08723.*

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