

CONDENSATION

With cooler outside temperatures you are likely to experience condensation inside your motor home. Those who travel extensively or take winter trips will probably first notice moisture on the inside of windows and walls.

Many of our daily activities generate this moisture. One source suggests that breathing and perspiration alone can generate as much as three pounds of vapor per person per day! Add cooking, bathing, washing dishes and laundry, and it is easy to see that a lot of water vapor or humidity can be introduced into a coach in a relatively short amount of time. Imagine the effects of this moisture accumulation over several days if not dealt with in some manner.

Monitoring and controlling relative humidity within the RV is one of the most important steps to minimize the risk for moisture-related damage. Ideally, relative humidity should be at 60 percent or less. Relative humidity can be monitored utilizing a portable hygrometer, a small device that measures temperature and relative humidity. Hygrometers are available at electronics or building supply stores for about \$30.

The most effective way to deal with condensation is to ventilate your coach. Modern construction methods, with improved insulation and weather stripping, create a living space that can be virtually airtight when closed up, allowing little or no moisture laden air to escape. At the same time, metal structure within the sidewalls and around openings conducts the cold into the vehicle where it condenses the moisture in the air. Removing this moist air is the best way to prevent this condensation from forming.

Effects of condensation within a motor home can range from foggy windows to water literally running down the walls. Items stored in enclosed spaces such as cabinets and drawers can actually become damp and musty. If left unattended, mold and mildew can form.

Small amounts of mold should be cleaned as soon as it appears. Small areas of mold should be cleaned using a detergent/soapy solution or an appropriate household cleaner. Gloves should be worn during cleaning. The cleaned area should then be thoroughly dried. Dispose of any sponges or rags used to clean mold.

In more severe cases, you may develop dry rot or structural damage to the wooden

components in the coach. This type of damage often goes unattended, as it may not be readily visible and is usually quite expensive to repair. In order to help guard against the effects of condensation in your motor home we have compiled the following list of “do’s” and “don’ts.”

DO:

- Be conscious of activities that generate moisture and humidity.
- Open a window or roof vent slightly when camping in cold conditions.
- Use your range hood fan when cooking.
- Open your bath vent when bathing or showering.
- Avoid generating unnecessary steam from boiling water or running hot faucets.
- Check enclosed areas such as cabinets and wardrobes for signs of moisture accumulation.
- Wipe up damp or wet areas as you find them.
- Check washer/dryer vents frequently.
- Thoroughly clean any areas of mold or mildew.
- Avoid drastic thermostat setbacks.

DON'T:

- Bring unnecessary sources of moisture into the coach – snow on shoes or wet clothes.
- Put items in storage when they are damp or wet.
- Hang wet laundry to air dry.
- Allow condensation to dissipate on its own.
- Overfill storage areas with little air circulation.
- Park over wet or muddy surfaces that may increase moisture levels within the coach.

In addition to the suggestions listed, many people will utilize a small fan to increase circulation within the living quarters. There are also small mechanical dehumidifiers that do an excellent job of deterring the buildup of condensation.

Whatever steps you take to minimize condensation and its effects in your motor home, it will help to prevent costly damage and make your time spent camping during colder conditions more enjoyable!