



HUMIDITY & YOUR HOME

Controlling the humidity in your home is vital for you and your family's health and your home's interior finishes.

WHAT IS HUMIDITY?

Humidity is simply the amount of moisture or water vapour in the air. You usually hear the term "relative humidity" and this just means that the amount of moisture that the air can hold is relative to the temperature of the air. When warm air comes in contact with a cold surface such as windows, doors and mirrors; it "drops" some of it's moisture - this is called condensation.

As the owner of a new home you will need to be extra vigilant of humidity levels within your home. Modern homes are built very airtight which is great for heat retention, but can contribute to high humidity if not managed correctly. **Although it is recommended to keep a humidity level of 35 - 45 % year round, during the extreme cold weather like we experience in Saskatchewan, a humidity level below 30% may be required to prevent any moisture related damage to your home, which would not be covered under your warranty.**



HIGH HUMIDITY

Your household produces moisture by cooking, washing, bathing and exercising. Your family and pets bring many litres of water into your home every day. That feeling of high humidity in a home is often described as muggy, steamy, clammy, sticky and stifling but the effects of high humidity go far beyond mere discomfort. **High humidity is not healthy for your family or your home.**

THE WARNING SIGNS...

- **Excessive moisture** - in the air causes condensation on windows to increase, water runs down the windows damaging your drywall, trim and flooring.
- **Doors & Locks** - due to the fact that condensation will form where hot air meets cold, high humidity can cause frost build up on doors locks and doors - making it difficult to gain entry to your home and causing damage to the door and lock. *This type of damage can be costly to repair and is not covered under warranty.*
- **Mold growth** - develops when the moist air is trapped in the corners of ceilings, walls, floors and around windows causing damp spots and staining to your home and also mold spores which are damaging to health.
- **Electronics** - are damaged by high humidity and will burn out much faster.
- **Warping** - doors will swell from the moisture and begin to warp making them hard to open and close and cause damage to the frame.
- **Flooring** - moisture from humidity will cause damage to hardwood/laminate flooring. (see page two)
- **Basements** - it is common to have condensation and ice build up on your unfinished basement walls during the winter when your humidity is high.

PREVENTION & FIXES

- **Cooking causes moisture** - cover pots and pans with lids and ensure to run your kitchen exhaust fan while cooking.
- **Showers** - keep bathroom doors shut and run your bathroom fan for the duration of your shower as well as 20 minutes after.
- **Ventilation** - open a window or door for a short period of time to let the place breath.

SUMMER

- **Run your air conditioner.** If you don't own an air conditioner run a fan as it will move the air and help with evaporation.
- **Turn your humidifier to the summer setting/off position**

WINTER

- **Run HRV system** - if you have a HRV unit at your home; **run it on the intermittent cycle of 20min/hr.** A HRV works by bringing fresh air from outside into your home and pulls stale air out. On this setting the air is exchanged with the outside for 20 min of the hour and then recirculated for the remaining 40 min. For periods of excess pollutants & humidity (parties, smoke etc) run the system on Max until the problem is resolved. Also ensure that the **filters are clean**; these should be cleaned every 3 months.
- **Ensure that the exterior HRV intake is free of debris and ice.**
- **Turn up the heat** - keep all rooms at a minimum of 10 degrees even if unoccupied.
- **Keep windows clear** - remove screens from doors and windows and ensure drapes and blinds are open to allow air flow.
- **Turn your humidifier setting down** - sometimes the setting on the humidifier will need to be adjusted daily to reflect the fluctuations in the exterior temperature.

FACT

The No.1 warning sign of high humidity in your home is condensation on windows and frost build up on doors and locks - areas where hot air meets cold. This build up of moisture or frost can cause damage to walls and surrounding areas. We often get calls in the winter time from homeowners who think their windows are leaking but this all comes down to excessive humidity being created in the home.



DID YOU KNOW?



Bugs & mold love a humid home! Allergens and mold thrive in high humidity and along with damaging your home; can cause allergies and asthmatic conditions. Dust mites love humid conditions and will live in bedding, upholstery and furnishings.

Check out our easy to use customer support tools & videos at:

northprairiehomes.com/customer-experience



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"Please get in touch with me if you have any questions in relation to caring for your new home. I would be happy to help!"

Christine McKay

Customer Support Coordinator

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FACT

We need humidity for our comfort and health but too much or too little can produce many difficulties for homeowners. **It is recommended homeowners keep their relative humidity between 35% to 45% all year round.** We highly recommend homeowners purchase an inexpensive hygrometer to properly monitor the relative humidity levels in their home.



LOW HUMIDITY

THE WARNING SIGNS...

- **Health issues** - such as nosebleeds, itchy eyes, dry throat, cracked skin.
- **Floor & furniture** - damage caused by cracking and warping.
- **Static electricity** - builds up in the home and can shock homeowners when touching light switches, door knobs etc.
- **Caulking, grouts and glues** - shrink and weaken leaving gaps between countertop and walls as well as baseboards and walls

PREVENTION & FIXES

- **Humidifier** - If you are finding the home dry in the winter, ensure the humidifier is turned on, the filter is clean and the system is operating properly. If your home is not equipped with a humidifier we recommend you install a humidifier directly to your furnace or purchase individual units for rooms or areas in your home.

The goldilocks principle applies here; just as too moist is not good, neither is too dry.

THE STRAIGHT GOODS ON WOODS - HUMIDITY EFFECTS ON YOUR FLOORING

Much like any wood product used in the construction of your new home, both hardwood and laminate flooring will expand and contract according to the humidity level in your home. The first two years are especially critical for your flooring, while the wood normalizes to climate conditions.

There is no warranty on damaged flooring caused by humidity or general maintenance issues so it's essential that you monitor and prevent these issues from occurring.



CUPPING



CROWNING

CUPPING & CROWNING: **Cupping** usually occurs when the unfinished side of the flooring is exposed to excess moisture. This can cause the edges of the boards to swell and rise higher than the center of the boards. The first step to remedy this is to identify the moisture source: high indoor humidity, a water spill, a leak from a dishwasher hose or a plumbing leak, for example. Once the cause of the moisture is identified and controlled, cupping can potentially be reversed. **Crowning** is the term used when the middle of the board is higher than the edges of the board. This can occur when the surface of the floor encounters moisture or is left exposed to wet or humid conditions for an extended period of time. Make sure spills are mopped up and dried as soon as possible and never leave a wet towel or other damp items on the floor. **These conditions can be found in both hardwood and laminate flooring.**



CRACKS & GAPPING: As a natural product, your hardwood floor will continue to absorb and release moisture. The natural process will cause the flooring to expand and contract from season to season, resulting in gapping between some of the boards as well as cracks on the surface of the boards (face checking). Laminate flooring being made of mostly wood fibers will also have similar effects throughout the seasons. **Keeping the humidity levels in the recommended range of 35% to 45% and a temperature of approximately 20 degrees year round will help keep your floors in tip top shape.**

MAINTENANCE & CLEANING - Use only hardwood or laminate flooring approved products to clean the floors. Do NOT use abrasive cleaners and soap detergents as these products can dull the finish and damage the floor. Use a damp mop, not a soaking wet one and always dry your floor thoroughly with a clean soft cloth after mopping. Dirt, grit and sand are your floor's worst enemies. They act like sandpaper on the finish, causing scratches, dents and dulling. Sweep or vacuum high traffic areas often and place mats at all exterior doorways to trap dirt and prevent damage.



Is your floor creaking and squeaking?

Most squeaks occur as a result of the normal cycle of seasonal contraction and expansion and minor squeaking is normal. The seasonal change of humid summers to dry winters can cause fine cracks to develop during drier conditions and wood to swell during humid conditions. When the wood swells it causes the boards to rub together, resulting in squeaks. It should also be noted that laminates are installed in such a way that they can accommodate expansion. Often referred to as 'floating floors', deflection can sometimes be felt when walking across them. This is completely normal. **The best way to help minimize these squeaks is to keep your humidity at the recommended range of 35% to 45%.**