



HUMIDITY TOO HIGH IN THE WINTER?

- When the air is too humid in your home, increased moisture can result in stained ceilings and walls, excess attic frost, frost/condensations on the windows, doors and doorknobs, as well as swollen hardwood floors, doors and cabinets.
- While many homeowners don't realize it, newer, energy-efficient homes tend to fall victim to problems of high humidity more often. Because these homes are sealed up tight to prevent energy loss from heating and cooling, the home also seals in a lot of moisture.
- **The homeowner is responsible to monitor and manage the humidity in their home regularly, especially during winter months**

The following are some basic steps to controlling the humidity in your home:

CONTROLLING THE ENVIRONMENT

HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator)

- Proper settings and operation are critical in preventing unintended damage to ceilings, window trims, and other parts of your home.
- An HRV is designed to expel stale moist air and draw in drier, fresh air. It also provides a vital balance in air pressure.
- If your home is equipped with an HRV make sure the filters are cleaned regularly and the unit is running properly, with settings fit for winter operation (check the “winter setting” chart).
- **In winter months (October-March), an HRV may be required to run all the time to assist in maintaining appropriate relative humidity levels.**
- Make sure your HRV is properly programmed to draw in air from outside and operate automatically in response to the conditions in your home. It may enter a “defrost cycle” occasionally but will return to drawing fresh air once complete.
- The colder the weather, the more important it is to maintain appropriate relative humidity levels.
- Ensure HRV Filter is clean and clear of debris.

Important: Winter Settings	
Outside Air Temp	Max Indoor Relative Humidity (RH) at 20 degrees
-20 °C or below	20%
-5 °C to -19 °C	25%
-4 °C to +5 °C	30%
*General runtime of 20 minutes/60 may be sufficient for proper operation. If humidity levels cannot be reduced to meet suggested RH % above, run time setting may be required to be adjusted to full/max setting.	

Ventilation Fans (Homes equipped with ventilation fans instead of an HRV)

- While there are many different configurations, the concept is the same. **If your home has a primary ventilation fan instead of an HRV it is vital the unit be in operation especially during the winter months.**
- As with the HRV, the ventilation fan provides a necessary service in the exchange of stale moist air with dry fresh air. It also provides a balance of air pressure reducing the chance that moist air is pushed into cold spaces (attic) in turn condensing and turning to frost.

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Kitchens & Bathrooms

- In the winter especially, it is very important you run the provided fans, not only during cooking and showering but for at least 60 minutes after to help manage your homes humidity.
- Moisture in the fan vent pipe requires time to evaporate or it may freeze as it enters attic space, or drip back down into the home.

Heat Ducts & Airflow

- Air must be allowed to flow freely around the home.
- Replace furnace filters as required by the manufacturer.
- Raise blinds in the morning, open the curtains.
- Make sure heat vents are not covered by curtains, furniture, rugs, beds etc.
- Remove any ice build up from exhaust fans.

** If you are unsure as to the operation and maintenance of your mechanical equipment, please reach out to your builder or our team for further information or assistance.*

GETTING READY FOR WINTER CHECKLIST

- Set HRV humidity %. Start at 25% and adjust accordingly.
- Set cycle time to 20 minutes/60 and adjust accordingly. May be required to adjust to full/max cycle setting.
- Monitor humidity levels throughout winter months and adjust accordingly.
- If you have a Primary Ventilation Fan (PVF) switch (generally in your mechanical room), ensure it is turned on for the winter months.
- Run bathroom fans and hood fan during and for 60+ minutes after using the shower or cooking facilities.
- Humidifier (if applicable) set to winter mode or turned off (if necessary).
- Replace your furnace filter as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wash your HRV filters (if applicable) to ensure they are clean and clear of any debris.
- Keep snow clear from around your roof vents if possible.
- Keep your garage floor and driveway as clear as possible of snow and ice. Note: application of salts and/or de-icers may damage concrete.
- Run water through plumbing fixtures that are not used regularly to ensure there is water in the p-trap.
- Balance air flow at heating ducts.
- Clean range hood filter.
- Review granite countertops and tile backsplash, apply sealer to counters and grout.
- Pour bucket of water into floor drains to avoid a dry p-trap.
- Review your roof often for ice dams and snow build-up to ensure attic vents are not obstructed.
- Keep snow away from gas meters, gas appliance vents, exhaust vents, and basement windows.
- Monitor outdoor vents, gas meters, and chimneys for ice and snow build-up.
- Test fire and smoke detectors and change back-up batteries.
- Check electrical cords, plugs, and outlets for all indoor and outdoor seasonal lights for fire safety.

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