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Fogged-up car windows: how to combat interior moisture when temperatures drop

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Occupants' breath, wet floor mats and a lack of ventilation all contribute to moisture building up inside a car. Keeping the interior dry and using the demisting system correctly can help improve visibility on cold days.

On cold winter mornings, it is common to get into a car and find the windscreen or windows fogged up on the inside. This can happen within minutes, especially when several people get into the vehicle wearing wet clothes or shoes after a day of rain or snow.

Fog forms when water vapour in the air inside the car comes into contact with the cold glass and condenses into small droplets. Although this is common, it can reduce visibility, making it necessary to demist the windows properly before setting off.

Humydry, specialists in moisture-control solutions, point out that prevention starts with identifying the source of the moisture and stopping it from accumulating inside the vehicle for hours or days. This is especially important in cars that are rarely used or remain closed for long periods.

Where does the moisture that fogs up windows come from?

Passengers' breath adds water vapour to the air inside the car, especially on journeys with several people and the windows closed. Umbrellas, coats, shoes and floor mats can add moisture after a rainy day, as can snow that stays on boots and melts onto the mats.

If fabrics are not dried and the car remains parked for many hours, some of that moisture can become trapped inside. When the car is used again, the contrast between the air inside and the

cold glass makes fog more likely to return. That is why, in vehicles that remain closed for long periods, it is advisable to check the floor mats, upholstery and boot from time to time.

However, fogged-up windows do not necessarily mean there is a fault or a persistent moisture problem. If fogging happens very frequently or is accompanied by wet upholstery, a damp smell or pooled water, it is worth checking for leaks or faults in the ventilation system.

If a significant amount of water has entered the vehicle, the priority is to remove it, dry the interior thoroughly and identify where it came in. If the water may have reached electrical or mechanical components, a professional inspection is necessary.

Five habits that help prevent fogging

Dry the floor mats: check particularly where water from footwear collects and remove the mats to dry them when necessary.

Do not leave wet items inside: take out damp umbrellas, clothes and bags rather than leaving them for hours in a closed car, and shake snow off boots before getting in.

Keep the windows clean: regularly clean the inside of the windscreen and windows to maintain good visibility.

Use the demisting system properly: direct the air towards the windscreen and turn on the demisting function or air conditioning, following the vehicle manufacturer’s instructions.

Refresh the air when possible: encourage ventilation and check for persistent damp in the upholstery, boot or door seals.

How to control moisture when the car remains closed

In addition to these habits, moisture-control solutions can help reduce some of the excess moisture in the air while the vehicle is parked, especially during colder months and in cars used sporadically. This is a complementary measure: it does not immediately demist the windscreen or replace ventilation.

Humydry’s options include the 200 g Eco-Box, a moisture absorber that takes in excess humidity from the air and turns it into gel, retaining it inside the product. Because it does not collect liquid, the risk of spills is reduced, which is particularly useful inside a vehicle. Its compact format is designed for small spaces, and the brand includes it among its solutions for cars and caravans.

When a car is going to remain parked for an extended period, another option is to use a 450 g Humydry moisture absorber containing calcium chloride. This type of product absorbs moisture from the air and collects the resulting liquid in its reservoir. For use inside a vehicle, it must be placed on a flat, stable surface where it is visible, its condition can easily be checked and there is no risk of it tipping over. It is important to remove it before setting off, to prevent it from moving or spilling the collected liquid.

In all cases, it is essential to follow the instructions for use, regularly check the condition of the product and replace it when its absorption capacity is exhausted. It must be positioned securely so that it cannot move or interfere with the pedals, controls, visibility or occupants’ movements. Before driving, the driver must check that the windows are completely clear.

Prevention is no substitute for visibility at the wheel

Reducing moisture accumulated in floor mats and fabrics, ventilating the car properly and keeping the windows clean can help make fogging less persistent. But when fog does appear, the priority is always to use the vehicle’s demisting systems and not set off until visibility is adequate.

About Humydry

Humydry has been developing solutions to control excess moisture in the home for 40 years and is present in more than 50 countries. Its moisture-control products reduce humidity in the air simply and without electricity, helping to prevent problems associated with excess moisture, such as condensation, unpleasant odours and mould.

Autor:
AgenciaNinja

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