

Mold Assessment and Moisture Intrusion



Health Risks Associated With Mold

Mold is perhaps the most controversial and misunderstood home health concern. Many in the mold remediation business are eager to exaggerate the health risks associated with black mold or molds in general as a way of promoting the business. However, on the other hand many homeowners and contractors are too eager to entirely dismiss the health concerns associated with mold. The truth is that mold does not follow the patterns and models associated with other indoor air contaminants. Mold is an evolving concern that does not follow any convenient philosophy and can have devastating health repercussions. Much of the concern associated with mold is based on the allergenic effects rather than risks of infection or other chemical hypersensitive effects.

The general approach to dealing with mold is to remove/correct the moisture source and remove the damaged building materials. Most mold projects can be dealt with a restoration projects rather than mold abatement projects. What is the difference? Speed. If you remove the mold and the moisture source, the mold will eventually go away on its own through ventilation, natural degradation and other attenuation mechanisms. However, mold spore counts will likely remain high for days or weeks if mold is removed without special precautions or controls. Mold abatement is appropriate when speed counts and mold needs to be removed and a living space restored quickly for re-occupancy.

There are no mold regulations in Michigan. The lack of mold regulation is beneficial in that it allows a flexible and pragmatic approach to a given mold situation and costs can be balanced against the timetable for completion of the

project. In a few circumstances, duct cleaning is performed as part of a mold abatement project.

Mold Testing

According to Dr. John D. Shane, Vice President of Laboratory services of PRO-LAB millions of homes across America have hidden water leaks that are promoting mold growth that can expose homeowners to mold spores. Mold has a potential to cause health problems like allergies, irritation (to lungs, eyes, skin, throat, nose) and are potentially toxic. Inhaling and touching mold spores may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals and normally healthy individuals may become sensitive to mold after exposure.

The EPA states that, "It is important to take precautions to limit your exposure to mold and mold spores. Avoid breathing in mold or mold spores". The EPA also recommends that if you suspect you have a hidden mold problem you should consider hiring an experienced professional to avoid exposure to potentially massive doses of mold spores.

Mold damages what it grows on. The longer it grows the more damage it can cause. If there is a mold problem in your home, you should clean up the mold promptly. Mold can be hidden, growing on the water from a hidden leak, and can develop into a potentially large problem if not caught in time.

Testing your home on a regular basis is a prudent way to prevent small problems from growing into a costly and unhealthy situation, and always avoid exposing yourself and others to mold.

Mold testing services can fill the following role in restoration and abatement projects:

- Defining the background level of mold in a house when a limited scope project is undertaken and funds are not available to do a full mold cleanup of a building.
- Determining the type of mold present. Homeowners and contractors performing restoration projects will be more at ease knowing the mold is not a high-risk mold type. Many will opt to leave dealing with high-risk mold types to the professionals although this is not necessarily required for non-allergic personnel who take some precautions.

- Defining the mold spore levels in a building following completion of a restoration or abatement project. The air test results can be used to provide assurances that the mold spore levels are "safe" and that no hidden or chronic problem remains.

Ten Things You Should Know About Mold

1. Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposure include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.
2. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.
3. If mold is a problem in your home, you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.
4. Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.
5. Reduce indoor humidity (to 30% to 60%) to decrease mold growth by:
 - a. venting bathrooms, dryers, and other moisture-generating sources to the outside;
 - b. using air conditioners and de-humidifiers;
 - c. increasing ventilation; and
 - d. using exhaust fans whenever cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning.
6. Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24 to 48 hours to prevent mold growth.
7. Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely. Absorbent materials that are moldy (such as carpeting and ceiling tiles) may need to be replaced.
8. Prevent condensation. Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof and floors) by adding insulation.
9. In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting.

10. Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on virtually any substance, provided moisture is present. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods.

Mold Remediation Contractors:

Great Lakes Remediation
2610 Horseshoe Dr
Highland, Michigan 48356
(248)887-6654
<http://greatlakesremediation.com/>

Clean Air Contracting & Remediation, Inc.
Troy Webber
2070 Edwards Ct
Clinton Twp., Michigan 48382
(248)363-7354
(248)790-0730

Peak Environmental
1520 Premier Dr
Troy, Michigan 48084
(248)792-9443
<http://www.peakenvironment.com/>

Servpro
North Oakland County (248)439-1160
General (800)SERVPRO
<https://www.servpro.com/mold-remediationn.com/>

Mold Testing Labs:

Absolute Labs
240 WAuburn Rd
Rochester Hills, Michigan 48307
(248)844-9000
<http://absolutelabs.net/>

IMS Laboratory

3130 Old Farm Lane, Ste. 1
Commerce Twp., Michigan 48390
(248)669-2280
<http://www.imslaboratory.com/>

Pro-Lab
(800)427-0550
<http://reliablelab.com/>

Mold Resources

National Association of Mold Professions (NAMPP)
<http://www.moldpro.org/>

Aspergillus
<http://www.aspergillus.org.uk/>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
<http://www.epa.gov/>

American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI)
<http://www.aaaai.org/global/nab-pollen-counts.aspx>

Center for Disease Control (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/mold/>