



MOLD INFORMATION & PREVENTION

ABOUT MOLD

Indoors and out, in both old and new construction alike, mold is found virtually everywhere in our environment. Molds have existed practically since the beginning of time and all of us have lived with mold spores all our lives. Mold breaks down organic matter in the environment and uses the end-product for its food source; without molds, we would all be struggling with large amounts of dead organic matter. They are naturally-occurring microscopic organisms that reproduce by spores. Mold spores (like plant pollen) spread through the air and are commonly transported by shoes, clothing and other materials. When excess moisture is present inside a dwelling, mold can grow. There is conflicting scientific evidence as to what constitutes a sufficient accumulation of mold which could lead to adverse health effects. Nonetheless, appropriate precautions need to be taken.

PREVENTING MOLD BEGINS WITH YOU

In order to minimize the potential for mold growth in your home, you must do the following:

Keep your home clean, especially the kitchen, bathrooms, carpets and floors. Regular vacuuming, mopping and using a household cleaner to clean hard surfaces is important to remove the household dirt and debris that harbor mold or the nutrients required for mold growth. Immediately throw away moldy food.

Remove visible moisture accumulation on windows, walls, ceilings, floors and other surfaces as soon as reasonably possible. Look for leaks in washing machine hoses and connection valves, especially if the leak is large enough for water to seep into surrounding walls. Turn on any exhaust fans in the bathroom before you turn on the shower and in the kitchen if you are cooking with open pots. When showering, be sure to keep the shower curtain inside the tub or fully close the shower doors. Also, experts recommend that after taking a shower or bath, you: 1) wipe moisture off the shower walls, shower doors, the bathtub and the bathroom floor; 2) leave the bath door open until all moisture on the mirrors and bathroom walls has dissipated; and 3) hang up your towels and bath mats so that they will completely dry out...better yet, toss them into the dryer!

Promptly notify management in writing about any air conditioning or heating system problems you discover. Make sure that you are changing your air conditioner filters monthly. It is also recommended that you periodically open windows and doors on days when the outdoor weather is dry to help humid areas of your home dry out.

Promptly notify management in writing about any signs of water leaks, water infiltration or signs of mold. We will respond in accordance with state law and your Lease to repair or remedy the situation, as necessary.

AVOID MOLD GROWTH IN THE FIRST PLACE

It is most important to prevent excessive moisture buildup in your home. Failure to promptly pay attention to leaks and moisture that might accumulate on surfaces or that might get inside walls or ceilings can encourage mold growth. Prolonged moisture can result from a wide variety of sources, such as:

- ✓ rainwater leaking from roofs, windows, doors and outside walls, as well as flood waters rising above floor level;
- ✓ overflows from showers, bathtubs, toilets, sinks, washing machines, dehumidifiers, refrigerator or A/C drip pans or clogged A/C condensation lines;
- ✓ leaks from plumbing lines or fixtures, and leaks into walls from bad or missing grouting or caulking around showers, tubs, or sinks;
- ✓ washing machine hose leaks, plant watering overflows, pet urine, cooking spills, beverage spills and steam from excessive open-pot cooking;
- ✓ leaks from clothes dryer discharge vents (which can put a lot of moisture in the air); and
- ✓ insufficient drying of carpets, carpet pads, shower walls and bathroom floors.

MOLD ON NON-POROUS SURFACES

If small areas of mold have already occurred on non-porous surfaces, such as ceramic tile, formica, vinyl flooring, metal, wood or plastic, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that you first clean the areas with soap and water, let the surface dry, and apply a spray household biocide (such as Lysol®, Pine-Sol®, Tilex®, or Clorox Cleanup®) within 24 hours. Note: Only a few of the common household cleaners will actually kill mold. Tilex and Clorox contain bleach that can discolor surfaces, so avoid spraying near carpet and painted surfaces. *Be sure to follow instructions on the containers.* Be aware that applying biocides without first cleaning away the dirt and oils from surfaces will impair the effectiveness of the solution.

Always clean and apply a biocide to an area 5-6 times larger than the visible mold because mold may be adjacent in quantities not yet visible to the naked eye. A vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter can be used to help remove non-visible mold products from porous items such as upholstered furniture, drapes and carpets, if the fibers are completely dry. Machine washing or dry cleaning will remove mold from clothes.

MOLD ON POROUS SURFACES

Visible mold on porous surfaces, such as sheetrock walls or ceilings, or larger areas of mold on non-porous surfaces should not be cleaned with a biocide. Instead, notify management in writing and we will take appropriate action in compliance with the Texas Property Codes, subject to the special exceptions for natural disasters. We will want to insure that the visible mold is not an indicator of a larger problem, such as an ongoing leak within a wall. We may also need to contact the owner's insurance company for any coverage to water damaged areas. Should that become necessary, your cooperation in expediting entry into the home is essential in order to minimize the mold growth.

COMBATTING MOLD IS A TEAM EFFORT

Following the guidelines given will help prevent mold growth within your rental home, and will allow both you and management to be able to respond correctly if problems develop that could lead to mold growth. If you have questions about these guidelines, please call your property manager for clarification. If you fail to comply with the steps contained herein, you can be held liable for property damage to the home and any health problems that may result. Management can not fix problems in your home unless we know about them, so it is imperative that you notify us immediately in writing if you believe a problem exists. We appreciate your cooperation!