

PROTECT YOUR HOME AGAINST MOLD DAMAGE

Mold is a type of fungus. It occurs naturally in the environment, and it is necessary for the natural decomposition of plant and other organic material. It spreads by means of microscopic spores borne on the wind, and is found everywhere life can be supported. Residential home construction is not, and cannot be, designed to exclude mold spores. If the growing conditions are right, mold can grow in your home. Most homeowners are familiar with mold growth in the form of bread mold, and mold that may grow on bathroom tile.

In order to grow, mold requires a food source. This might be supplied by items found in the home, such as fabric, carpet or even wallpaper, or by building materials, such as drywall, wood and insulation, to name a few. In addition, mold growth requires a temperate climate. The best growth occurs at temperatures between 40° F and 100° F. Finally, mold growth requires moisture. Moisture is the only mold growth factor that can be controlled in a residential setting. By minimizing moisture, a homeowner can reduce or eliminate mold growth.

Moisture in the home can have many causes. Spills, leaks, overflows, condensation, and high humidity are common sources of home moisture. Good housekeeping and home maintenance practices are essential in the effort to prevent or eliminate mold growth. If moisture is allowed to remain on the growth medium, mold can develop within 24 to 48 hours.

CONSEQUENCES OF MOLD. Not all molds are necessarily harmful, but certain strains of mold have been shown to have adverse health effects in susceptible persons. The most common effects are allergic reactions, including skin irritation, watery eyes, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, congestion, sore throat, and headache. Individuals with suppressed immune systems may risk infections. Some experts contend that mold causes serious symptoms and diseases which may even be life threatening. However, experts disagree about the level of mold exposure that may cause health problems, and about the exact nature and extent of the health problems that may be caused by mold. As of the date of this Agreement, The Center for Disease Control has not identified a link between the presence of toxic mold and serious health conditions.

WHAT BUYER CAN DO TO PREVENT MOLD. The homeowner can take positive steps to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of mold growth in the home, and thereby minimize any possible adverse effects caused by mold. These steps include the following:

- Regular vacuuming and cleaning will help reduce mold levels. Mild bleach solutions or most tile cleaners are effective in eliminating or preventing mold growth.
- Keep the humidity in the home low. Vent clothes dryers to the outdoors. Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms by opening the windows and using exhaust fans.
- Promptly clean up spills, condensation and other sources of moisture.
- Thoroughly dry any wet surfaces or material. Do not let water pool stand in your home. Promptly replace any materials that cannot be thoroughly dried.
- Inspect for leaks on a regular basis, look for discolorations or wet spots. Repair any leaks promptly. Take notice of musty odors, and any visible signs of mold.
- Should mold develop, thoroughly clean the affected area with a mild solution of bleach. First, test to see if the affected material or surface is color safe. Porous materials, such as fabric, upholstery, or carpet should be discarded. Should the mold growth be severe, call on the services of a qualified professional cleaner.