

MOULD CONTROL & PREVENTION

KEEP AREAS AS CLEAN AND DRY AS POSSIBLE.

Materials that stay wet for more than 48 hours are likely to produce mould growth.

- ◆ Materials that are wet and cannot be thoroughly cleaned or dried should be discarded including ceiling tiles, wallboard, and carpeting.
- ◆ Lowering the humidity by use of air conditioners and dehumidifiers will lessen the likelihood of mould growth.

HOW SHOULD I CLEANUP?



Wash and disinfect walls, floors, closets, shelves, and content with common household cleaning products and disinfectants.

- ◆ Be careful about mixing household cleaners together. Read and follow label instructions carefully, and provide fresh air by opening windows and doors.
- ◆ If able, use fans both during and after the use of disinfecting, cleaning, and sanitizing products.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR WHEN CLEANING UP?

Persons cleaning mould should wear gloves, eye protection, and a dust mask (an N95 or P100 dust mask is most ideal) to protect against breathing airborne spores.

- ◆ The N95 dust masks are available at some supermarkets and hardware stores on the island.
- ◆ Following clean-up, the area should be monitored. The moisture content of porous materials such as wallboard need to be reduced to less than 15%, and this can be monitored with a variety of hand-held moisture meters.
- ◆ The target humidity is 30-60% relative humidity (30-50% is better).



For further information

Please contact DEH at

The following addresses below

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FACTS ON

MOULD



Cayman Islands
Department of
Environmental Health
(DEH)

MOULD FACTS

WHAT IS MOULD?

Moulds, sometimes referred to as mildew, are a group of organisms that are fungi that grow in the right conditions – where it is warm and humid.

- ◆ Mould is mostly detected by a musty odour although this is not always the case.
- ◆ Mould produces spores that spread through the air and form new colonies (mould growths).
- ◆ Outdoors, mould live in the soil, on plants, and on dead or decaying matter. There are thousands of species of mould and they can be any colour.

HOW DOES MOULD GET INDOORS?

Mould comes from outdoor sources and needs moisture to grow.

- ◆ Standing water and wet materials are a breeding ground for mould.
- ◆ No mould should be allowed to grow and multiply indoors.
- ◆ Common sources of indoor moisture that cause mould problems include flooding, roof and plumbing leaks.

WHY THE CONCERN ABOUT MOULD?

Large quantities of mould growth may cause odours, damage furnishings and finishes, and cause health problems for some people.

- ◆ Some moulds produce toxic substances called *mycotoxins*.
- ◆ In rare cases, high or chronic airborne exposures, have been associated with illnesses.
- ◆ No mould should be allowed to multiply indoors by large quantities.
- ◆ A certain species of mould has been found to produce toxic effects.



HEALTH FACTS

WHAT ARE HEALTH EFFECTS OF MOULD EXPOSURE?

Mould is carried into the respiratory tract when airborne dust particles are inhaled.

- ◆ Allergic reactions, similar to common pollen or animal allergies, and irritation are the most common health effects for individuals sensitive to moulds.
- ◆ Flu-like symptoms and skin rash may occur and mould may also aggravate asthma.
- ◆ Contact with mould may also lead to dermatitis.
- ◆ Most symptoms are temporary and eliminated by correcting the mould problem.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY MOULD?

People with special health concerns should consult their doctor if they are concerned about mould exposure.

- ◆ People who may be affected more severely and quickly than others.
- ◆ This includes infants and children; elderly people; pregnant women; people with respiratory conditions, allergies, or asthma; people with weakened immune systems – chemotherapy patients, transplant recipients, autoimmune diseases.
- ◆ Mould in buildings may cause or exacerbate symptoms of allergies (such as wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath, nasal congestion, and eye irritation), especially in persons who have a history of allergic diseases (such as asthma).
- ◆ Illnesses can result from both high level, short-term exposures and lower level, long-term exposures.



DETECTING MOULD

HOW IS MOULD DETECTED?

Seeing mould is usually the first step in identifying the mould problem.

- ◆ Check walls, ceiling tiles, sheetrock, cabinets for mould growth.
- ◆ Industrial Hygienists may use a boroscope or a moisture meter to detect moisture in building materials.
- ◆ Air sampling for mould is expensive and not usually routinely done unless an individual has been diagnosed with a disease that is or may be associated with a fungal exposure.
- ◆ If there is a strong suspicion that the ventilation systems may be contaminated, or if there are musty odors but no sign of mould.



Symptoms from toxic effects of mould include fatigue, nausea, and headaches. People performing renovations/cleaning of widespread fungal contamination may be at risk for developing Organic Dust Toxic Syndrome (ODTS). ODTS may occur after a single heavy exposure to dust contaminated with mould. ODTS produces flu-like symptoms.