



## MOLD INFORMATION

Mold is found virtually everywhere in our environment-both indoors and in both new and old structures. Molds are naturally occurring microscopic organisms which reproduce by spores and have existed practically from the beginning of time. All of us have lived with mold spores all our lives. Without molds we would all be struggling with large amounts of dead organic matter.

Mold breaks down organic matter in the environment and uses the end product for its food. 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. A 2004 Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found that there is currently no scientific evidence that the accumulation of mold causes any significant health risks for persons with normally functioning immune systems. Nonetheless, appropriate precautions need to be taken.

1. **PREVENTING MOLD BEGINS WITH YOU:** In order to minimize the potential for mold growth in your dwelling, you must do the following:
  - ✓ Keep your dwelling clean-particularly the kitchen, the bathroom(s), 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 food for mold. 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 discharge lines-especially if the leak is large enough for water to infiltrate nearby walls. Turn on any exhaust fans in the bathroom and kitchen before you start showering or cooking with open pots. When showering, be sure to keep the shower curtain inside the tub or fully close the shower doors. Also, the experts recommend that after taking a shower or bath, you should wipe moisture off of shower walls, shower doors, the bathtub and the bathroom floor, leave the bathroom door open until all moisture on the mirrors and bathroom walls and tile surfaces has dissipated and hang up your towels and bath mats so they will completely dry out.
  - ✓ Promptly notify us in writing about any air conditioning or heating system problems you discover. Follow our rules, if any, regarding replacement of air filters. Also, it is recommended that you periodically open windows and doors on days when the outdoor weather is dry (i.e., humidity is below 50%) to help humid areas of your dwelling dry out.
  - ✓ Promptly notify us in writing about any signs of water leaks, water infiltration or mold. We will respond in accordance with state laws and the Lease Contract to repair or remedy the situation, as necessary.
  - ✓ Keep the thermostat set to automatically circulate air in the event temperatures rise to or above 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. **IN ORDER TO AVOID MOLD GROWTH:** It is important to prevent excessive moisture buildup in your dwelling. Failure to promptly pay attention to leaks and moisture that might accumulate on dwelling 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, lavatories, sinks, washing machines, dehumidifiers, refrigerator or A/C drip pans or clogged up A/C condensation lines
  - ✓ Leaks from plumbing lines or fixtures and leaks into walls from bad or missing grouting/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 lots of moisture into the air)
  - ✓ Insufficient drying of carpets, carpet pads, shower walls and bathroom floors.
3. **IF SMALL AREAS ON 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 (or detergent) and water, let the surface dry, and then within 24 hours apply a pre-mixed, spray-on-type household biocide, such as Lysol disinfectant, Pine-Sol Disinfectant (original pine scented), Tilex Mildew Remover or Clorox Cleanup. (NOTE: Only a few of the common household cleaners will actually kill mold). Tilex and Clorox contain bleach which can discolor or stain. Be sure to follow the instructions on the container. Applying biocides without first cleaning away the dirt and oils from the surface is like painting over old paint without first cleaning and preparing the surface.

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

4. **DO NOT CLEAN OR APPLY BIOCIDES TO:** (1) Visible mold on porous surfaces, such as sheetrock walls or ceilings, or (2) large areas of visible mold on non-porous surfaces. Instead, notify us in writing, and we will take appropriate action.