

# Moisture, mildew and mold

**What to do when you see excessive condensation, how to clean up surface mold, and how to keep it from coming back.**

*Discovering mold in your home is not uncommon if condensation is a persistent problem.* The most common areas to see mold growth are on and around windows, in bathrooms and around plumbing. However, by doing some investigation work and following a few simple steps, you can easily clean up the mold, find and fix the cause, and prevent it from reoccurring.

## CLEANING UP VS REMEDIATION

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In the event of an ongoing leak, or large-scale mold problem, professional remediation is sometimes necessary. Cardinal Properties will review problem areas on a case-by-case basis to determine if remediation is necessary. An area less than 10 square feet usually does not require professional remediation.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

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Responsibility for cleaning up a problem is based on cause.

**In general, the property owner is responsible for the following conditions:**

Plumbing failure; Appliance or hot water heater failure; Roof leak; Flood

**Tenants may be responsible in the following conditions:**

Failure to vent unit after showers; Overcrowding unit; Failure to report an obvious problem in a timely manner; Failure to keep unit clean; Failure of plumbing or appliance due to mis-use; Flood or leak from tenant owned appliances.

**For mold problems determined to be tenant caused, Cardinal Properties will evaluate the problem and discuss clean-up and payment options with the tenant.**



# Find and fix the cause

You may be asked to help with further diagnosis or to make some changes in your home that will keep mold from coming back.

1. Does the bathroom get really foggy/remain damp after a shower? Are you using your exhaust vent or opening a window to get rid of extra humidity?
2. Does the apartment/house feel extra humid when you run the dryer? Is the dryer vent blocked or plugged or incorrectly connected?
3. Check under sinks and near dishwasher, washing machine, tubs etc for signs of drips or leaks.
4. Are there bubbles in paint or on the ceiling or is the ceiling sagging?
5. Are there any soft spots or sponginess in floor, particularly around appliances, hot water heater, or sinks & tubs & especially toilets?
6. Can you see any drips or standing water in the crawl space?
7. Can you hear running water anywhere?
8. Have sprinklers been hitting the house?
9. Are there any leaking or drippy gutters?
10. Is there any water puddling near the foundation?
11. Do you have a window air conditioner? Is it level and are the drip pans and drain lines clean?

**Please advise Cardinal Properties if any of these conditions are present in your unit.**

## SAFETY

Most molds and mildews are not toxic, but they can cause allergic reactions or be hazardous in large amounts. **Wear a breathing mask and gloves when cleaning up mold.**

# Prevent growth conditions

Mold requires moisture to grow. Proper ventilation is the most important thing you can do to keep your home condensation- and mold-free

1. You **MUST** turn on your bathroom exhaust vent or open a window when you shower to vent excessive moisture to the outside – run exhaust fan or keep window open for an additional 15-30 minutes after showering.
2. Keep drapes and curtains open as much as possible to allow air to circulate on the windows.
3. If you have a ceiling fan, use it- even in the winter- to get air moving.
4. Turn off any humidifiers you may have running.
5. Downsize and de-clutter: homes that are very crowded often hold more moisture. Moving large furniture a few inches away from walls and getting rid of items is a good way to help air circulate and prevent moisture and mold problems.
6. Insulate windows with bubble wrap to keep warm air away from the cold glass.
7. Keep an eye on areas where moisture is most likely to be a problem – windows, plumbing, sinks, showers, dishwashers and hot water heaters – and notify Cardinal Properties if you see any cause for concern.

# Cleaning up

## 1. REMOVE EXCESS SPORES

- A. DRY:** If the affected area is dry, use a vacuum cleaner to remove any loose spores. If you're working on a window, keep it open to allow the particles of mold an escape route. Run the nozzle of the hose over the entire area, making sure you cover every section. Once complete, clean the vacuum nozzle with a cloth dampened with vinegar.
- B. WET:** If the area is wet, use a cloth that has been dampened with tepid water to wipe off the excess mold. Do not rub too hard so you can avoid forcing mold spores into the wood or drywall, and regularly rinse the cloth in clean water.

**3. CLEANING UP** Once the excess mold has been removed, spray some white vinegar on the area and leave it for a few minutes. Then, put some baking soda onto a clean cloth and use it to rub away the mold. The baking soda will act as an abrasive and the vinegar will kill the spores. Alternatively, use a solution of 1 cup borax to 1 gallon water to kill the mold spores and a soft bristle brush to remove the excess mold from the affected area.

**4. REPEAT** this process as needed until all the mold is gone.

**5. STAINS** Mold can leave stains – if you have cleaned the area thoroughly and are still seeing black marks, you can use household bleach to remove the stains.



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