

Protecting Yourself From Mold

Molds are microscopic organisms found everywhere in the environment, indoors and outdoors. Most molds are harmless but some can cause infections, allergy symptoms and produce toxins. Inhalation is the most common exposure to cleanup workers.

Health effects of mold exposure

- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Eye irritation
- Skin rash
- Cough/congestion
- Aggravation of asthma

People with: a weakened immune system, allergies, asthma, sinusitis, or other lung diseases are at the greatest risk of health effects from mold.

How to recognize mold

- Sight – Usually appears as colored woolly mats.
- Smell – Often produce a foul, musty, earthy smell.

General cleanup recommendations

- Identify moisture problems and remove excess moisture with a wet-dry vacuum.
- Make sure working area is well ventilated.
- Use fans to help dry.
- Clean wet items/surfaces with detergent and water.
- Work and egress areas should be cleaned with a damp cloth or mop and detergent solution.
- Discard all water/mold materials in plastic bags.
- Discard all porous items that were wet for 48 hours.
- Disinfect surfaces.
- Use appropriate respiratory protection.
- Use hand/eye protection (non-vented goggles).
- Wear long gloves made of protective material.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Set up a decontamination area.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke in work areas; avoid breathing dust. After work wash thoroughly.
- Rewet materials to suppress mold and dust.
- Use a HEPA vacuum on clean dry areas.

Specific remediation tactics

Small areas – Less than 30 sq. feet

- The work area should be unoccupied.
- Remove any at risk individuals.
- Wear PPE including non-vented goggles.
- Cover surfaces with secured plastic sheets.
- At a minimum, use a half-face or full-face N,R, or P-95 respirator.

Large areas – 30-100 sq. feet

Follow the same directions as above, but also:

- Clear the area directly adjacent
- Cover vents and grills with plastic sheets.

Extensive and visible mold contamination

- Develop a suitable mold remediation plan addressing: work area isolation, the use of exhaust fans with HEPA filtration, and the design of airlocks/decontamination room.
- At a minimum, use a half-face or full-face N, R, or P-100 respirator
- Wear PPE including non-vented goggles.
- Consult with experienced health and safety professionals prior to this level of remediation

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com