

Residential and Commercial  
Property Inspections



## Preventing Mold Problems

Molds are simple microscopic organisms found almost everywhere, indoors and outdoors. For molds to grow and reproduce they need a food source – any organic material such as wallpaper, cardboard, wood, leaves, paper or dirt - - and moisture. Molds release tiny, lightweight spores, which travel through the air.

It should be noted I am a generalist visual inspector and that mold is not part of any standard home inspection. I have done extra research to provide this information to the public. If you suspect mold or are concerned about possible molds in your environment, you should have a mold expert come out and do a mold inspection. There is further information on this at the end of the article.

That being said, everyone is exposed to some of these spores every day with no apparent harm. Health problems can be caused by the few toxic molds or when molds are inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin in large numbers. This occurs primarily when there is an active growth in a home or school or workplace. Molds will grow where the conditions are right – organic material present and sufficient moisture available.

Common sources of moisture which contribute to mold growth are steam from showers and cooking, overflows from sinks and drain pipes, plumbing leaks, damp basements and crawl spaces, humidifiers, wet clothes drying indoors, leaky roofs, leaky windows or doors, clothes dryers exhausting indoors and over-watering against the house.

**To help prevent mold problems, inspect your home for indoor moisture issues and take steps to eliminate them as quickly as possible.**

- Maintain good ventilation in all areas especially closets, laundry rooms, bathrooms, attics, basements and crawl spaces.
- Keep indoor humidity levels low, about 40%, if possible
- Do not carpet bathroom floors.

- Add mold inhibitors to paint.
- Do not allow irrigation systems to spray water against the house.

**If a leak or flood occurs:**

- Identify and stop the source of the leak or flooding.
- Remove excess water with mops or wet vacuum
- Move wet items to a well-ventilated area.
- Remove carpet and padding as soon as possible.
- Open closet and cabinet doors and move furniture away from the walls to increase circulation.
- Run dehumidifiers to decrease humidity.
- Run portable fans to increase circulation. DO NOT use fans if mold is present or if mold may have begun to grow – more than 48 hours after the flood.
- DO NOT run the home's central blower to ventilate the area as moisture can get into the home's central system, promote mold growth and spread the spores.
- DO NOT use heat in confined areas as high temperatures can promote mold and increase the rate of mold growth.
- If water has soaked inside wall cavities, remove baseboards and plaster to allow drying.

If you suspect a mold problem, consult the correct professional. In this case only a Registered Environmental Health Specialist can evaluate the indoor air quality and recommend the appropriate solution.

For more information about toxic mold and practical solutions to handling it visit [www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html).

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**Property Inspectors are not qualified to identify or evaluate mold or fungi.**