



COLBURN GROUP

MOLD PREVENTION METHODS

Is there anything that can be done to prevent mold? Absolutely! The key to mold control is moisture control. When excessive moisture or water accumulates indoors, mold growth often will occur, particularly if the moisture problem remains uncorrected. While it is impossible to eliminate all molds and mold spores, controlling moisture can control indoor mold growth. By solving all moisture problems before they turn into mold problems, you will prevent damage to building materials and furnishings, save money and avoid any health risks that mold can potentially cause.

Mold prevention tips for commercial buildings include:

- .. Being on alert for condensation and wet spots.
- .. Repairing plumbing leaks and leaks in the building structure as soon as possible.
- .. Looking for condensation and wet spots. Fix source(s) of moisture incursion problem(s) as soon as possible.
- .. Acting promptly when water leaks or spills occur indoors. Any initial water infiltration should be stopped and cleaned promptly. A prompt response (within 24-48 hours) and thorough clean-up, drying, and/or removal of water-damaged materials will prevent or limit mold growth.
- .. Preventing moisture from condensing by increasing surface temperature or reducing the moisture level in the air (humidity). To increase surface temperature, insulate or increase air circulation. To reduce the moisture level in the air, repair leaks, increase ventilation (if outside air is cold and dry), or dehumidify (if outdoor air is warm and humid).
- .. Keeping HVAC drip pans clean, flowing properly, and unobstructed.
- .. Performing regularly scheduled building/ HVAC inspections and maintenance, including filter changes.
- .. Maintaining indoor relative humidity below 70% (25 - 60%, if possible).
- .. Venting moisture-generating appliances, such as dryers, to the outside where possible.
- .. Venting kitchens (cooking areas) and bathrooms according to local code requirements.
- .. Cleaning and drying wet or damp spots as soon as possible, but no more than 48 hours after discovery.
- .. Providing adequate drainage around buildings and sloping the ground away from building foundations. Follow all local building codes.
- .. Pinpointing areas where leaks have occurred, identifying the causes, and taking preventive action to ensure that they do not reoccur.

Questions That May Assist in Determining Whether a Mold Problem Currently Exists

- .. Are building materials or furnishings visibly moisture damaged?
- .. Have building materials been wet more than 48 hours?
- .. Are there existing moisture problems in the building?
- .. Are building occupants reporting musty or moldy odors?
- .. Are building occupants reporting health problems that they think are related to mold in the indoor environment?
- .. Has the building been recently remodeled or has the building use changed?
- .. Has routine maintenance been delayed or the maintenance plan been altered?

Remediation Plan

If you are unable to prevent the growth of mold utilizing the techniques listed above, remediation includes both the identification and correction of the conditions that permit mold growth, as well as the steps to safely and effectively remove mold-damaged materials.

Before planning the remediation, assess the extent of the mold or moisture problem and the type of damaged materials. If you choose to hire outside assistance to do the cleanup, make sure the contractor has experience with mold remediation.

The remediation plan should include steps to permanently correct the water or moisture problem. The plan should cover the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). It also should include steps to carefully contain and remove moldy building materials in a manner that will prevent further contamination. Remediation plans may vary greatly depending on the size and complexity of the job, and may require revision if circumstances change or new facts are discovered.

If you suspect that the HVAC system is contaminated with mold, or if mold is present near the intake to the system, contact the National Air Duct Cleaners Association at www.nadca.com. Do not run the HVAC system if you know or suspect that it is contaminated with mold, as it could spread contamination throughout the building. If the water or mold damage was caused by sewage or other contaminated water, consult a professional who has experience cleaning and repairing buildings damaged by contaminated water.

The remediation manager's highest priority must be to protect the health and safety of the building occupants and remediators. Remediators should avoid exposing themselves and others to mold-laden dusts as they conduct their cleanup activities. Caution should be used to prevent mold and mold spores from being dispersed throughout the air where they can be inhaled by building occupants. In some cases, especially those involving large areas of contamination, the remediation plan may include temporary relocation of some or all of the building occupants.

Our team of P&C experts is here to help. If you need assistance with developing a mold remediation plan, please contact Marti Smith at 248-643-4800 today.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.