

Mold & Moisture

Additional Resources

The following websites are additional information on landlord responsibilities as well as mold facts:

The Dept. of Consumer Affairs in California

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/problems.shtml>
(800) 952-5210

Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/>
(415) 947-8000

California Department of Public Health

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Pages/IndoorMold.aspx>



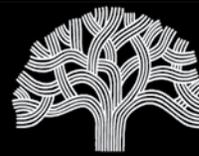
CITY OF OAKLAND
BUILDING SERVICES

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Oakland, CA 94612
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Protecting Health

&

Avoiding Costly Repairs



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Providing Healthy Housing

Before renting a unit, a landlord is responsible for making sure the property "is fit for occupation by human beings and that it substantially complies with state and local building and health codes that materially affect tenants' health and safety"
(Green v. Superior Court, 1974)

Moisture and the resulting mold are not healthy and can make a house not livable, especially for infants, children, elderly, and people with a weakened immune system. A person with HIV, cancer, chemotherapy, and respiratory issues (i.e. asthma, emphysema, COPD, and chemical sensitivities) are more likely to be affected by moisture and mold exposure.

There have been mold-related court settlements in California. These settlements to families who suffered chronic respiratory problems were due to landlords failing to respond to complaints about mold and properly cleaning it up. Low cost preventative maintenance can protect property investment and tenants' health by managing mold before the property requires costly repairs.

What is Mold & Where Does it Come From?

Mold is a fungus that is naturally present indoors and outdoors.

Mold's function is to decay organic materials. Mold produces small spores that travel through the air and grow on damp organic surfaces. There are three things mold needs to grow: 1) water, 2) food, 3) proper temperature. When mold is found indoors, there is sufficient moisture on walls and other surfaces for mold to grow.

How much moisture does mold need to grow?

Indoor humidity of 55% or higher is ideal for mold to grow, and it only takes 24-48 hours to develop. Moisture can come from a roof or plumbing leak, air drying clothes inside the house, lack of air circulation, closed windows and heating or air conditioning systems.

What materials can act as food for mold?

Any organic material such as wood gypsum, wallboard, insulation, ceiling tiles, paper products, dust, paint, carpet, and fabric (curtains).

At what temperature does mold grow?

Mold can grow in temperatures between 40°F–99°F.

Signs & Symptoms Of Mold Exposure

Most Common

Sneezing
Wheezing
Nasal Congestion
Eye Irritation
Nose and throat Irritation
Rashes



Severe Cases

Headaches
Difficulty Breathing
Memory Problems
Mood Swings
Body Aches
Fever



Cleaning & Removing Mold

- Non-porous surfaces (i.e. counter tops, glass, plastic, metal) can be cleaned with water and mild detergent; rinse with water and dry thoroughly.
- Porous materials (i.e. dry wall, rug/carpet and padding, upholstered furniture, mattresses) need to be discarded.
- Do NOT paint or caulk over a moldy surface.
- Do NOT clean mold with bleach. It is an asthma trigger and can cause an asthma attack. (NEVER mix bleach with ammonia. It will produce toxic fumes).
- It is recommended to hire a professional when the area contaminated with mold is larger than 15 square feet.

Mold Prevention

You cannot mold-proof a house, but you can make it mold resistant by addressing the conditions that lead to mold growth.

Ensure Adequate Airflow

- Windows open and close properly.
- Windows are double pane when possible.
- Exhaust fans work properly.
- Walls are insulated to avoid condensation.

Eliminate Moisture Intrusion

- Clean and repair rain gutters.
- Use downspouts to ensure that water is directed away from the house.
- Slope the ground away from the house to redirect water flow.
- Fix cracks in walls, around windows, and doors.
- Caulk around windows, bathtubs and showers, and vents.
- Vent appliances (i.e. clothes dyers) so that the exhaust is directed outside the house.
- Fix leaking water and sewer pipes immediately.

Address Flooding or Water Damage

When a large amount of water has entered a house, remove items that cannot easily be dried (i.e. furniture, carpet, padding, bedding, books, paper, etc.).

Use an extraction vacuum to remove water from carpets and rugs. Hire a professional as needed for clean up.

