

Fighting Mold



A Guide for Staff of HIV/AIDS Supportive Housing

Bailey House, Inc.
Technical Assistance &
Program Evaluation Department
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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & PROGRAM EVALUATION (TAPE)

Bailey House TAPE offers support to HIV/AIDS organizations with the goal of improving the availability and effectiveness of HIV/AIDS services. Through TAPE, we address the widespread need for permanent, affordable AIDS housing and share our expertise in adapting service models to meet the needs of people with AIDS.

TAPE programs conduct a variety of activities in New York City and across the country including training workshops for and one-on-one technical assistance (TA) to HIV/AIDS organizations. The TAPE Department also publishes a variety of helpful publications available for ordering online at www.baileyhouse.org.

TAPE programs consist of:

AIDS Services Organization Management Institute (ASOMI) builds the capacity of organizations through one-to-one TA and trainings in core management areas including board development, strategic planning, fundraising, human resources and program design.

Fiscal Infrastructure Services (FIS) provides TA to HOPWA/PCMH-funded and other HIV/AIDS housing and related organization in developing and maintaining effective financial management systems.

HIV/AIDS Housing Services and Operations Program (HSO) provides training and individual organizational TA in four service areas: housing operations management, program development, clinical services training, and independent living skills training.

Human Resources Technical Assistance (HR TA) provides trainings and one-to-one assistance in human resource management. Additionally, the HR TA program offers conflict resolution services training.

Permanent Housing and Special Efforts for Subpopulations Technical Assistance (PHASES-TA) Program helps to improve and expand the housing and services for homeless people by increasing the capacity of grass-roots faith and community based organizations; supporting them through hands-on technical assistance, regional group trainings and resource dissemination.

Program Evaluation Service (PES) provides capacity-building TA to eligible HIV/AIDS organizations to design and implement appropriate outcome-based program evaluation.

Technical Assistance Clearinghouse (TAC) is a service for New York community-based AIDS organizations. Our mission is to help CBOs learn more about the help that is available – including books, publications, trainings, Web sites, and direct assistance from management and organizational experts (TA providers). The TAC also has a job bank, grant opportunity listings and many resources for PLWHAs.

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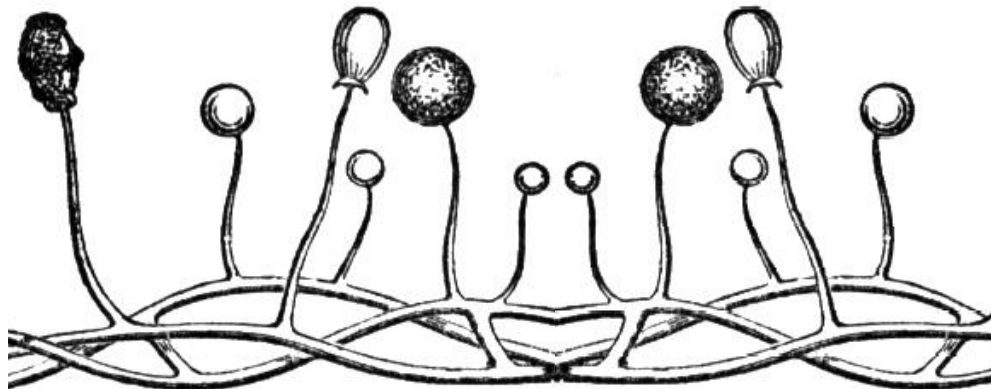
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What Is Mold?

In laymen's term, mold is basically a fungus (fungi). Molds are microscopic fungi, a group of organisms that also includes mushrooms and yeasts. These fungi can be found almost anywhere and are part of the natural environment.

Outdoors, molds play a key role in nature by breaking down dead organic matter such as leaves, wood (dead trees), and other plant debris. Molds use plant material for food by digesting them. Without molds, humans would likely be in a struggle with large amounts of dead plant matter.

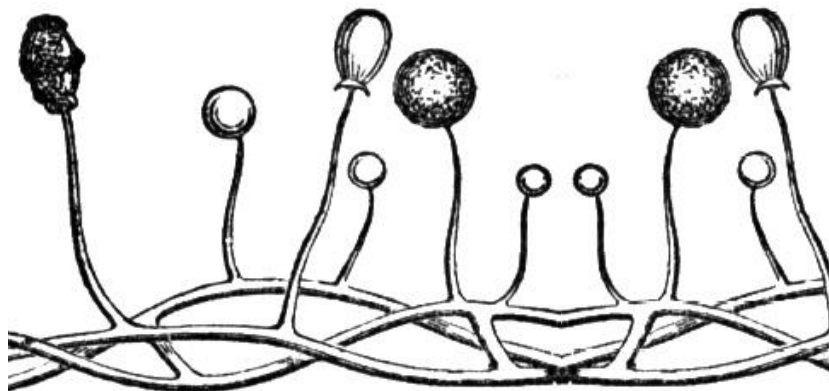
We encounter mold every day. Foods spoil because of mold. Leaves decay and dead wood lying on the ground rot due to mold.



Paper or fabrics stored in a damp place get a musty smell that is due to the actions of molds. Fuzzy black growth on wet windowsills is mold.

Some molds can be useful to people. The drug Penicillin is obtained from a specific type of mold. Mold that is useful to humans is selected and grown in a controlled fashion.

Molds are found in virtually every environment and can be detected, both indoors and outdoors, throughout the year. Indoor mold growth is encouraged by warm and humid conditions.



Mold Growth Facts...

Molds need only two things for growth—food and moisture.

There are molds that specialize in eating just about every possible type of organic material.

Mold growth can be seen in the form of a discoloration that is black or ranging from white to orange or green to brown. Mold can sometimes be detected by its musty odor. Mildew is a common mold.

When provided with suitable food (e.g., ceiling tile, drywall, paper products, wood products, cardboard, textiles, grease, dirt, dust, soap, scum, some carpeting and furniture, food) and moisture (in the form of high humidity; condensation; or water from leaking roofs, pipes, walls, plant pots, flooding), these genera of fungi will gladly set up housekeeping and begin to grow.

Molds require oxygen, but not light, for growth. Mold growth can continue indefinitely without light.

The molds most commonly found indoors are *Aspergillus*, *Alternaria*, *Cladosporium* and *Penicillium*.

Molds reproduce by releasing tiny spores (invisible to the eye) into the air that settle on surfaces and under the right conditions, grow.

Mold growth does not require the presence of standing water, leaks or floods; mold can grow when the relative humidity of the air is high. Molds can also grow in damp areas such as unvented bathrooms (especially shower stalls) and kitchens, crawl spaces, utility rooms, closets, gym areas and locker rooms, wet foundations, leaky roof areas, places where fresh food is stored, refrigerator drip trays, air conditioners, humidifiers, garbage pails, and damp basements. High moisture levels can be the result of moisture produced by people living in the home, through daily activities like bathing, washing clothes or cooking.

What are the health concerns?

Indoors, molds have been known to cause health problems. When mold spores settle on organic or contaminated surfaces and when other conditions of temperature, humidity, shade or darkness, and oxygen supply are conducive, they germinate and develop new colonies of mold.



Molds that grow inside of homes and apartments may be different from the ones found outdoors. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified indoor mold as one of the main biological pollutants along with bacteria, mildew and dust mites.¹ The Bureau of Environmental & Occupational Disease Epidemiology, which is a division of the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene, calls indoor molds "fungal metabolites that have been identified as toxic agents."²

Everyone is exposed to biological pollutants. However, the effects on our health depend upon the type and amount of biological pollution and the individual person. Some people do not experience health reactions from certain biological pollutants while others may experience one or more of the following reactions:

allergic
infectious
toxic

Allergic Reactions

Allergic reactions are the most common health problems associated with biological pollutants. Symptoms often include watery eyes, runny nose and sneezing, nasal congestion, itching, coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing, headache, dizziness and fatigue. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “A major concern associated with exposure to biological pollutants is allergic reactions, which range from rhinitis, nasal congestion, conjunctival inflammation, and urticaria to asthma.”³

When inhaled, microscopic spores or fragments of fungi (molds) may cause allergic rhinitis. Mold spores are tiny bacteria—so small that as many as 250,000 spores can fit on a pinhead. Because they are so small, mold spores may evade the protective mechanisms of the nose and upper respiratory tract to reach the lungs. In some cases they may cause severe asthma attacks. In people with lung damage or serious underlying illnesses, *Aspergillus* (a type of mold) may grasp the opportunity to invade the lungs or the whole body.


The body has natural defense filtering systems (such as mucous lining, coughing and sneezing) against air laden with these contaminants; unfortunately, most mold spores overpower and pass through these defenses. Mold spores not only bypass

defenses because of their number, but also because they are so small. These very fine particles move into, accumulate and settle into the lower lungs. Remember that the lungs transfer oxygen to the bloodstream and most of the actual exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen takes place in the lower lungs. Now the lungs become a roadway for toxic materials to travel through the bloodstream with the oxygen. The body's reaction to the toxins permanently affects the lung's ability to transfer oxygen into the bloodstream. The lung tissue then becomes permanently scarred and each exposure to mold spores increases the damage.

The body's last defense against these tiny invaders is to develop an allergy-producing cold or pneumonia-like symptoms. In effect, the inhalation of fungal spores, fragments, or metabolites from a wide variety of fungi may lead to or exacerbate allergic reactions, cause toxic effects, or cause infections. In the case of people that have HIV/AIDS, the health effects can be severe.

Infectious Reactions

Most fungi (molds) generally are not pathogenic to healthy humans. There are a number of fungi that commonly cause superficial infections involving the feet, groin, dry body skin or nails. In contrast however, persons with severely impaired immune function, (e.g., people with HIV/AIDS, cancer patients receiving chemotherapy, organ transplant patients receiving immunosuppressive drugs, and people with uncontrolled diabetes), are at significant risk for more severe opportunistic fungal infection.



Although only a small group of fungi have been associated with infectious disease, there are several species of *Aspergillus* (the most common one is *Aspergillus Fumigatus*) that are known to cause aspergillosis. Aspergillosis is an infectious disease that can occur in persons with HIV/AIDS. Health effects in this population can be severe.

Exposure to this common mold, even to high concentrations, is unlikely to cause infection in a healthy person. According to Dr. Stephen C. Redd of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, "respiratory infections due to inhalation of the fungus *Aspergillus* have been documented mostly in immunocompromised individuals."⁴

In 1996, Dr. Neil M. Ampel, an associate professor of medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine and director of HIV Clinical Services at the Tucson Veteran's Affairs Medical Center wrote in an article on diseases and fungal pathogens associated with HIV infection that fungal diseases are increasing among patients infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) type 1 and Aspergillosis is increasing dramatically as an opportunistic infection in HIV-infected patients.⁵

It is extremely important that the HIV/AIDS housing provider community take a closer look at the issue of molds in their respective facilities to ensure that there are no conditions that may further compromise the health of their residents and staff.

Toxic Reactions

There are certain types of molds such as *Stachybotris Chartarum* that may produce compound toxic properties, which are called *mycotoxins*, some of which provide a valuable clinical use (e.g., Penicillin, Cyclosporin). There are however, some mycotoxins that can have adverse health effects for people with HIV/AIDS if inhaled in large quantities or ingested.

Mycotoxins are relatively large molecules. Because of their large size they generally do not evaporate and float away into the air environment the same way that spores do. Thus, inhalation exposure to mycotoxins is very rare. Most descriptions of human and veterinary poisonings from mold toxins involve eating moldy foods. Although they are far less common, diseases due to fungal toxins are far more feared. These diseases provoke significant anxiety due to their potential to cause dramatic consequences.

Some of the illnesses that have been ascribed to fungal toxins are limb gangrene, hallucinations, pulmonary hemorrhage, memory loss and death. According to CDC's Dr. Redd, "ingestion of foods contaminated with certain toxins produced by molds is associated with development of human cancer."⁶ It should be noted however, that there is currently a great deal of overblown fear and legal attention to environmental fungal toxins. Many of the studies done regarding mycotoxins have had inconclusive results. A review on this subject that appeared in the *Clinical Microbiology Reviews* stated that, "while there is cause for

concern about the potential effects of indoor mold exposure, particularly to *Stachybotris* species, there is no well-substantiated evidence linking the presence of this fungus to health concerns elaborated in the scientific and lay press."⁷

How do you prevent mold growth in the home?

Remember this strategy: Keep it clean and keep it dry. The best way to deal with mold is to implement a good preventive



maintenance program to prevent mold growth before it starts. Your program should be designed to help you locate, reduce and eliminate the sources of mold by preventing, inspecting for, and cleaning up leaks, standing water, and other elevated moisture conditions. This may include taking such steps as setting up a water leak hotline for your residents to report leaks, promptly mopping up water, replacing wet carpeting and keeping the site's humidity level in check.

Where mold growth has already started or is likely to start because of contamination from flooding or other moisture problems, not only clean and dry the surfaces but add a third strategy: disinfect.

Keep it Clean

Remember that moisture control is the key to mold control. When water leaks or spills occur indoors—**ACT QUICKLY**. If wet or damp materials or areas are dried 24-48 hours after a leak or spill happens, in most cases mold will not grow.

- Ensure that the roof gutters of your resident's facilities are cleaned and repaired regularly.
- Keep air-conditioning drip pans clean and the drain lines unobstructed and flowing properly.
- Mold can grow in refrigerators, particularly around door gaskets. Empty water pans found below self-defrosting refrigerators frequently. Spoiling foods should be removed immediately and the inside of the refrigerator kept clean of any spilled foodstuff.
- Molds grow in garbage containers, which should be emptied frequently and kept clean.

Use a grease-cutting solution of detergent and water to wash hard surfaces like walls and floors in order to remove organic material that supports mold growth. Trisodium Phosphate is an effective cleaner for removing grease. Commonly called TSP and highly alkaline, it can sometimes be found in hardware and paint stores for washing walls in preparation for painting. Precautions should be taken when using strong cleaners such as TSP: wear rubber gloves, goggles and a dust

mask. Avoid breathing the powder or getting it in the eyes.

Keep it Dry

Make sure that the ground slopes away from the building's foundation, so that water does not enter or collect around the foundation. Building basements and foundations must be kept as dry as possible to ensure that no mold growth occurs in those areas. Any time water penetrates a building, there's potential for mold growth. Building materials such as wood, fiberboard, and ceiling tiles are especially susceptible to mold, which grows within 24-48 hours of moisture being introduced.

If you see condensation or moisture collecting on windows, walls or pipes—**ACT QUICKLY** to dry the wet surface and reduce the moisture/water source. Condensation can be a sign of high humidity.

Keep indoor humidity low. If possible keep indoor humidity below 60% (ideally between 30 and 50%) relative humidity. Relative humidity can be measured with a moisture or humidity meter, a small, inexpensive (\$10-\$50) instrument available at many hardware stores.

Vent appliances that produce moisture, such as clothes dryers, stoves, and kerosene heaters to the outside where possible. (Combustion appliances such as stoves and kerosene heaters produce water vapor and will increase the humidity unless vented to the outside).

Use air conditioners and/or de-humidifiers when needed.

Run the bathroom fan or open the window when showering. Use exhaust fans or open windows whenever cooking, running the dishwasher, etc.

Cover cold surfaces, such as cold water pipes, with insulation.

Increase the indoor air temperature.

Reduce the amount of stored materials, especially items that are no longer used. Molds grow on fabrics, paper, wood and practically anything that collects dust and holds moisture.

How do you conduct inspections for mold?

The best way to determine if there is a mold problem in a building or a resident's apartment is by conducting a visual examination and smelling for odors.



It is imperative that trained staffs who know what to look for perform the inspection. Remember that time is the enemy when combating moisture contamination. Anytime



water penetrates a building, there's potential for mold growth.

Building materials such as wood, fiberboard and ceiling tiles are especially susceptible to mold, which grows within 24-48 hours of moisture being introduced. And it only gets worse with time because newer building materials don't dry as easily. That's why it is so important to respond to tenant complaints with an immediate request to inspect the property.

A visual examination of the residence (as well as surrounding residences) for signs of mold and sources of moisture should be thoroughly documented.

Because mold is often hidden from view in walls and ceilings, it's often more discernable by its smell. Keep a nose out for sources of "musty" odors, and look for visible mold colonies of varied texture and color.

Indoor mold can appear cottony, velvety, granular, or leathery and range in color from white and gray to yellow and green. You may suspect hidden mold if a building smells moldy, but you cannot see the source, or if you know there has been water damage and residents are reporting health problems.

Mold may be hidden in places such as the backside of drywall, wallpaper or paneling, the topside of ceiling tiles, the underside of carpets and pads, etc. Other possible locations of hidden mold include areas inside walls around pipes (with leaking or


condensing pipes), the surface of walls behind furniture (where condensation forms), inside ductwork, and in roof materials above ceiling tiles (due to roof leaks or insufficient insulation).

Investigating hidden mold problems may be difficult and will require caution when the investigation involves disturbing potential sites of mold growth. For example, removal of wallpaper can lead to a massive release of spores if there is mold growing on the underside of the paper. If no visible signs are present and you believe that you may have a hidden mold problem, consider hiring an experienced professional in order to decide if an “intrusive” investigation of wall and ceiling cavities is in order.

How do you clean up mold contamination?

Maintenance supervisors should ensure that mold contamination is cleaned up regardless of the types of molds that may be present at their facility or in a resident’s apartment. Environmental sampling is usually not necessary, since all molds need to be eliminated.





A thorough investigation of the building by the maintenance staff should reveal all sources of mold growth and water collection. No one with symptoms or at risk for mold-related illness should participate in the cleanup. The level of protection taken by those who will be working on the cleanup depends on the type of cleanup work:

Scrubbing hard surfaces such as tile, concrete or vinyl requires gloves for worker protection. An effective disinfectant is 10% chlorine bleach (1.5 cups bleach per gallon of water). Never mix bleach with ammonia. The area where the work is being performed must be well ventilated.

Any mold growth on porous surfaces such as ceiling tile, wallboard or wood usually requires tearing out and replacing materials. Cleanup workers should be free of allergies, asthma, and immune suppressive disorders. They should wear gloves, eye protection, disposable coveralls, head and shoe covers, and proper respiratory protection. Dust masks are not adequate for tear-out work. A disposable N-95 particulate respirator mask is usually adequate, as long as it is properly fitted.

The highest exposure to mold often occurs during cleanup. Staff and residents may need to temporarily leave work areas where cleanup is occurring, especially if they have symptoms or underlying medical conditions that increase their risk of mold-related illnesses. Training for cleanup workers should cover cleaning methods, use of personal protective equipment, and health hazards.

Guidance on cleaning up small mold problems

You can clean up “small areas” of mold (fewer than three patches, each smaller than a square meter) yourself. The minimum protective wear needed are:

- safety glasses or goggles,
- a disposable dust mask (3M 8210 or equivalent), and
- household rubber gloves.

***NOTE:** Infants and other family members with asthma, allergies or other health problems should not be in the work area or adjacent room during the cleaning process.*

For washable surfaces:

- scrub with an unscented detergent solution (Using an unscented detergent will make it easier for you to detect residual moldy odors.)
- sponge with a clean, wet rag and dry quickly

For moldy drywall:

- Clean the surface with a damp rag using baking soda or a bit of unscented detergent solution. Do not allow the drywall to get too wet.
- Mold that comes back after cleaning is usually an indication that a source of moisture has not been removed.

Guidance on cleaning up moderate mold problems

If you follow the proper procedures and use the proper protective equipment, you can clean up “moderate areas” of mold. “Moderate ” means more than three patches of mold, each smaller than one square meter, or one or more isolated patches larger than one square meter but smaller than three square meters (size of a 4x8 foot sheet of plywood).

Safety precautions:

- wear a disposable dust mask (3M 8210 or equivalent), safety glasses or goggles and household rubber gloves;
- isolate the area to be cleaned with plastic sheeting, taped to walls and ceiling;
- infants and other family members suffering from asthma, allergies or other health problems should not be in the work area or adjacent room during the cleaning process.
- A small cleanup should take minutes (not hours) to finish. When the cleanup takes hours to a day to finish, it is suggested that you upgrade to a better filter, such as a half-face respirator with charcoal cartridges.
- An exhaust fan installed in a window of the room being cleaned would prevent contamination of other areas

of the house as well as provide ventilation.

General cleaning

Vacuum surfaces with a vacuum cleaner, which has a **High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA)** filter or is externally exhausted. Scrub or brush the moldy area with a mild unscented detergent solution. Rinse by sponging with a clean, wet rag. Repeat. Dry quickly. **HEPA** vacuum the surfaces that were cleaned as well as surrounding areas.


Cleaning wood surfaces

Vacuum mold from wood surfaces using a HEPA or externally exhausted vacuum. Skip the vacuuming step if the wood is wet. Clean with a detergent solution then sponge with a clean, wet rag. Extract the moisture using a dry/wet vac and/or clean, dry rags. Accelerate the drying with fans and open windows. If the relative humidity outside is high, use a dehumidifier. The wood should not be allowed to remain wet for more than a day.

If cleaning with detergent and water does not remove the mold, try sanding the surface with a vacuum sander (simultaneous vacuuming and sanding). Do not attempt to sand without vacuuming. This method will not work if the mold has penetrated to the core of the wood. Severely moldy wood should be replaced.

Cleaning concrete surfaces

Vacuum the concrete surface to be cleaned with a HEPA or externally exhausted vacuum cleaner. Cleanup the surface with detergent



and water. If the surface is still visibly moldy, use TSP (Trisodium Phosphate). Dissolve one cup of TSP in two gallons of warm water. Stir for two minutes. **Note: TSP must not be allowed to come in contact with skin or eyes.** Saturate the moldy concrete surface with the TSP solution using a sponge or rag. Keep the surface wetted down for at least 15 minutes. Rinse the concrete surface twice with clean water. Dry thoroughly, as quickly as possible.

Cleaning moldy drywall

The paper facings of gypsum wallboard (drywall) grow mold when they get wet or repeatedly wet and don't dry quickly. Cleaning with water containing detergent not only adds moisture to the paper but also can eventually damage the facing. If the mold is located only on top of the painted surface, general cleaning as noted above can remove it. Remember that you must not allow the drywall to get too wet

If the mold is underneath the paint, the moldy patch and other moldy material behind it are best cut out and replaced. Remember however, that new material may also become moldy if the moisture entry has not been stopped. If this is the case, replacement of the materials should be deferred until the source of the moisture has been eliminated. The affected areas should be temporarily covered with plastic sheeting and sealed at the edges.

Does painting over a moldy surface take care of the mold problem?

Painting over mold only masks the problem. Paint does not kill the mold nor stop it from growing. Surfaces that are washable should be cleaned with a detergent solution, following the procedures suggested above, and then allowed to dry. If you are going to paint, remove mold first. Paint applied over moldy surfaces is likely to peel.

When should you seek professional help?

You may need professional help when:

- there is a lot of mold—if the contaminated area is extensive (greater than 30 square feet), professional help is recommended;
- the building or apartment where the mold has been discovered is very damp and moist;
- mold comes back after repeated cleaning; and
- a staff member or a resident suffers from asthma or respiratory problems or other health problems that appear to be aggravated inside the building or apartment.



Some key questions to ask in determining if mold remediation is needed:

- Are there extensive moisture problems in the building?
- Are occupants reporting health problems associated with mold contamination?
- Is there visible mold and/or damage to building materials?
- Is the area of visible mold or damage to building materials extensive?

How do you choose a mold remediator?

If your mold problem is too big for your maintenance staff to handle, you'll need to find a company or individual that can cleanup the mold for you—a mold remediation company or mold remediator. Ask questions

before hiring such a company. Since mold has become a "hot" topic, many firms have sprung up to take care of mold problems—some qualified, some not.




Before hiring a mold remediator, check these two things:

Certification: *Make sure the company is either a Certified Industrial Hygienist or a Certified Mold Remediator. The American Industrial Hygiene Association maintains a list of all certified industrial hygienists on its website at www.aiha.org (look under the heading "Consultants/Consumers").*

References: *Do a thorough background check on the company you're thinking about hiring, including a check on its credit and insurance coverage. You should also ask for 3-4 references to learn how the company solved other sites' mold problems. Mold can create huge public relations headaches for apartment sites. You don't want a mold remediator whose workers just come into your site, wearing protective suits, and scare your residents. You need to find out how the company's workers talk to residents and what they plan to do to allay residents' fears while working at your site.*

If you think you need to have your site tested for mold, don't use the same company to test for mold and then to fix the problem if mold is found. This way you prevent a company from saying you have a mold problem just so it can get more business by telling you it can also fix the problem. It's better to be up front and tell whomever you hire to test for mold that you'll be hiring someone else to fix the problem.



Property managers have a duty to keep their premises safe. Preventing and reducing mold growth is no exception. While quickly repairing leaking pipes and cleaning wet carpet is essential for prevention, developing dialogue with residents is another simple but effective step to limiting liability.

In the *Multifamily Owner's & Manager's Guide To Handling Mold Claims & Litigation*, the National Association Of Home Builders says that taking simple steps can help property owners and managers eliminate a tenant's basis for a lawsuit. Among its "top ten" suggestions are training maintenance staffs about mold and how to combat it, educating tenants about mold, inspecting common areas on a regular basis for signs of moisture and mold growth, responding as quickly as possible to tenant complaints, relocating residents during the repair and remediation process if necessary, and documentation of all inspections, resident complaints and remediation efforts as well as keeping tenants informed at all times.

Property managers should not wait for tenants to complain. Ask current tenants if they have had any water-intrusion problems, as well as if they've suffered any kind of respiratory, allergic or other adverse health conditions. Information discovered through this kind of inspection could then be acted upon in a quick manner.


Proactive inspections, full disclosure and education about household mold are your best bet to minimize adverse health situations. It's not enough to respond quickly once you

learn of a mold problem—train your tenants to be active lookouts to prevent moisture from mushrooming into a costly crisis.


The EPA says there is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment. The only way to control indoor mold growth, says the EPA, is to control moisture. Apartment providers are educating their residents that it is important not only to report immediately any plumbing leaks or other moisture sources but also to take specific actions to minimize mold growth in their apartments. Property managers must provide tenants with factual information about mold. Many management companies are even addressing mold in their lease agreements. In this way, they are giving notice to tenants that failure to report mold can be grounds for lease termination.

The National Multi-Housing Council offers these tested tips to residents to help them combat mold:

- Immediately report to the management office any evidence of a water leak or excessive moisture in your apartment, storage room, or any common area.
- Immediately report to the management office any evidence of mold growth that cannot be removed by simply applying a common household cleaner and wiping the area. Report any area of mold that reappears despite regular cleaning.

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- Immediately report to the management office any failure or malfunction with your heating, ventilation, air-conditioning system or laundry system. Do not block or cover any of the heating, ventilation or air-conditioning ducts in your apartment.
 - On a regular basis, wipe down and dry areas where moisture sometimes accumulates, like countertops, windows and windowsills.
 - Do not overfill closets or storage areas.
 - Do not allow damp or moist stacks of clothes or other cloth materials to lie in piles for extended periods of time.
 - Thoroughly clean and dry any spills or pet urine on carpeting.
 - Open windows. Proper ventilation is essential. If it is not possible to open windows, run the fan to circulate fresh air throughout your apartment.
 - In damp or rainy weather conditions, keep windows and doors closed.

Ensure that your apartment is cleaned and dusted on a regular basis. Regular vacuuming, mopping and use of environmentally safe household cleaners are important to remove household dirt and debris that contribute to mold growth.



Remember, property managers have a duty to keep their premises safe. Educating residents about what to watch for and how to prevent mold growth can help managers make proper repairs in an efficient manner.

Training staff on how to conduct mold inspections and on how to combat moisture contamination will ensure that immediate and effective remediation will take place when necessary. Developing a mold plan with written policies and procedures is essential. Following the procedures set forth in the mold plan will ensure a safe living and working environment for residents and staff.

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