

Controlling Mold

- ◆ As soon as it is safe to return home after a storm, begin cleaning up and drying.
- ◆ Mold testing is not usually needed.
- ◆ For extensive damage and mold growth, hire a reputable firm that is licensed to repair water damage and remove mold.

Doing the clean-up yourself

After water damage:

- ◆ Cover damaged areas of the roof with a water-proof tarp to prevent more damage.
- ◆ Take an inventory of your home and belongings.
- ◆ Dry all wet materials as quickly as possible. If possible, use air conditioning or heat with fans and dehumidifiers. If you have no power but have access to a generator, run a dehumidifier indoors.
- ◆ Remove wet carpets right away.
- ◆ Discard upholstered fabric furniture.
- ◆ Cut away wet wallboard and remove all damp insulation right away, even if the wallboard looks dry.
- ◆ Use nonphosphate detergents to clean. Phosphate residue is mold food.
- ◆ Do all you can to speed the drying of sub-floors, slabs and wall framing before replacing insulation, wallboard, and floors.
- ◆ Before replacing insulation, use a moisture meter to make sure the moisture content of the studs and sheathing is no more than 14 percent by weight.
- ◆ Remove wet insulation from the attic if it is saturated from blowing rain.
- ◆ Protect yourself. Wear long sleeves, long pants, sturdy shoes, gloves, and a mask or respirator (N-95 or better). If you are sensitive to mold, wear splash goggles.
- ◆ Isolate the work area and ventilate it to the outdoors. Seal off the contaminated area from the rest of the house.
- ◆ Remove and discard moldy materials.

- ◆ Clean small items in the washing machine.
- ◆ Clean all surfaces. Remove, don't just kill, the mold. Dead spores can cause health problems.
- ◆ Use a disinfectant to kill any mold missed by the cleaning. Use a solution of 1 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water. Do not use it in the air system.
- ◆ **Remain on mold alert:** Continue looking for signs of moisture or new mold growth. If mold returns, repeat the cleaning.
- ◆ Do not rebuild or refurbish until all affected materials have dried completely.

In hot, humid climates:

Mold can grow even if you do not have water damage but lose power.

- ◆ Ventilate the house as much as possible.
- ◆ Minimize the amount of moisture that you add to the inside of the home through showers, cooking, laundry, etc.

Choosing a mold contractor

- ◆ Check the phone listings for specialists in painting, restoration, carpet cleaning, furniture repair, and water damage.
- ◆ Make sure the business is licensed for mold remediation. Ask to see the licenses, including those of the people doing the work.
- ◆ Ask for and check references.

A remediation contract should specify:

- ◆ What is to be corrected, including a diagram that shows where the work will be done
- ◆ How long it will take to complete the work
- ◆ The materials required, such as lumber, sheetrock, carpet and padding, and paint
- ◆ Who will provide the renovation materials
- ◆ How the contaminated items will be handled
- ◆ Who will remove the debris from the site
- ◆ Warranties of work and guarantees on remediation

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