



Molds can grow inside most buildings if given the right conditions. Unfortunately, Inland facilities can often provide some of the best conditions for mold growth if good housekeeping standards are not maintained. In the winter, snow covered shoes, wet clothing and wet carpets can keep the moisture levels inside very high. In the summer, air conditioners can sometimes cause high levels of condensation on windows and walls. Take in to consideration that some of the facilities Inland operates in are very old and may not be up to current standards for insulation and weatherproofing. Now put a few of these conditions together and mold can easily start to show up.

By reading this EHS information bulletin, individuals with little or no experience with mold remediation may be able to reasonably judge whether mold contamination can be managed in-house or whether outside assistance is required. The information in this bulletin is intended only as a summary of basic procedures and is not intended, nor should it be used, as a detailed guide to mold remediation. Contact the EHS department for help in determining the extent of mold cleanup in your facility if needed.

Mold Basics

Molds are part of the natural environment. Molds are fungi that can be found anywhere - inside or outside - throughout the year. About 1,000 species of mold can be found in the United States, with more than 100,000 known species worldwide. Molds can grow on virtually any substance as long as moisture, oxygen, and an organic source are present. All molds share the characteristic of being able to grow without sunlight. This explains why mold infestation is often found in damp, dark, hidden spaces; light and air circulation dry areas out, making them less hospitable for mold.

Indoors, since mold requires water to grow, it is important to prevent excessive moisture in buildings. Molds are usually not problematic but problems may arise when mold starts eating away at materials, affecting their look and smell. Molds digest whatever they land on in order to survive. While it is impossible to eliminate all molds and mold spores, controlling moisture can control indoor mold growth.

Health Effects

Currently, there are no federal standards or recommendations, (e.g., OSHA, NIOSH, EPA) for airborne concentrations of mold or mold spores. This section provides a brief overview, but does not describe all potential health effects related to mold exposure. Potential health concerns are important reasons to prevent mold growth and to remediate existing problem areas.

- Molds can cause adverse effects by producing allergens.
 - The onset of allergic reactions to mold can be either immediate or delayed.
 - Allergic responses include hay fever-type symptoms such as runny nose and red eyes.
- Molds may cause localized skin or mucosal infections but, in general, do not cause systemic infections in humans, except for persons with impaired immunity, uncontrolled diabetes, or those taking immune suppressive drugs.
- Molds can cause asthma attacks in some individuals who are allergic to mold.
- Mold can irritate the eyes, skin, nose and throat in certain individuals.
 - Eating, drinking, and using tobacco products and cosmetics where mold remediation is taking place should be avoided. This will prevent unnecessary contamination of food, beverage, cosmetics, and tobacco products by mold and other harmful substances within the work area.

Prevention

Moisture control is the key to mold control. When water leaks or spills occur, act promptly! A prompt response (within 24-48 hours) will prevent or limit mold growth.

Mold prevention tips include:

- Repairing plumbing leaks and leaks in the building structure as soon as possible.
- Have an area to hang and dry out wet clothing.
- Utilize fans when possible to circulate air and help dry out floors and carpeting.
- Maintaining indoor relative humidity below 70% (25 - 60%, if possible).
- Keeping HVAC drip pans clean, flowing properly, and unobstructed. Performing HVAC inspections and maintenance, including filter changes.
- Pinpointing areas where leaks have occurred, identifying the causes, and taking preventive action to ensure that they do not reoccur.

For information on mold in the work place, go to;

<https://www.epa.gov/mold> or <https://www.epa.gov/mold/brief-guide-mold-moisture-and-your-home>