

Background information on mould

Mould has joined radon, asbestos, and other hazardous materials at the top of the construction industry's greatest concerns. Not only does it cause unsightly stains to household fabrics, damage to your belongings, and a musty, earthy odor in your home, it can also have a negative affect on the health and well being of your family. Unfortunately, mould is not an issue easily washed away, as visible surface growths are often just a sign of internal dampness, and to clean mould ones self is to risk possible over exposure and illness.

General

- Causes unsightly stains on you curtains, carpet, furniture, and other belongings, over time ruining them
- Paper and cardboard, often used in storage, will eventually disintegrate
- Damages paints, wood (including rot), drywall, fabrics, and ceiling tiles
- Causes a musty, earthy odor to permeate affected areas
- Water enters the building when there is a weakness or failure in the structure
- Any type of mould growing excessively indoors can pose a health problem

Health

- Mould can cause allergies, infections, and illness by releasing chemicals and spores
- Pregnant women, infants, the elderly, and those with health problems such as respiratory disease or a weakened immune system are most at risk when exposed to mould
- Exposure can make young children more susceptible to developing multiple allergies to items such as pollen, dust mites, pet dander, and certain foods later in life
- Exposure to extremely high indoor mould contamination has been associated with idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhages in infants and young children
- An increased risk of invasive mycose has been observed in people with immune suppression
- Symptoms for mouldy home dwellers can include coughing, wheezing, headaches, runny nose, red eyes, fatigue, and skin rash
- Moulds can also cause asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold
- Mould exposure can irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs of both mould-allergic and non-allergic people
- Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke may act synergistically with the factors associated with damp buildings, compounding the health effects of mould
- Trying to clean mold with bleach can create cancer causing substances, formed by the chemical reaction of mould and organic materials

Financial

- Mouldy ceiling tiles and carpets must be removed and discarded, as will any drywall that remains mouldy after attempted cleaning--these can be expensive processes
- Furniture with internal mould growth may need to be replaced
- You will need to pay for professional help in order to rid your home of mould
- Huge repairs and maintenance expenditures can be accrued on a yearly basis if it is an ongoing problem
- If you cannot afford repairs to your home, you may need to take on a loan
- Canadian insurance companies have clarified their policy wording concerning mould related damages so as to absolve them of payment duties, and most insurers have now introduced mould exclusions to their policies

Other Statistics

Mould

- Over 270 species of mould have been identified as living in Canadian homes

Mould in your home

- It can take signs of mould ten or more years to develop, so you may not notice signs when you first purchase a home
- Concrete is less likely to leak and cause mould than wood
- Larger buildings take longer to show water damage

Mould and the Law

- Since the late 1990's mould related litigation and insurance claims have exploded in North America
- Construction defect is the major reason for mould claims in the US, due to sloppy labour or shoddy materials
- According to US insurance industry statistics, the number of mold claims rose by more than 1300 per cent between the beginning of 2000 and the end of 2001, with total losses from mould claims increased to \$1 billion from \$14 million during the same period
- Regional public housing authorities in Vancouver have spent in the tens of millions of dollars to fix leaks and try and eradicate mould in at least seven public-housing projects in greater Vancouver

Useful Links

The Old House Web Guide:

http://www.oldhouseweb.com/stories/How-To/Controlling_Mold/

Health Canada:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/environ/air_e.html

Living in Toronto Public Health Guide:

<http://www.toronto.ca/health/mould.htm>

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine:

<http://communications.medicine.dal.ca/newsroom/dampspaces.html>

Canadian Centre for Health and Occupational Safety:

THE COLOUR OF PROTECTION

BLUWOOD
CANADA

http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/biol_hazards/iaq_mold.html

Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation:

http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/maho/yohoyohe/momo/momo_005.cfm

Ontario Ministry of Labour-Health and Safety:

<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/alerts/a20.html>

Mould Help:

<http://www.mold-help.org/>

BC Ministry of Health:

<http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile65b.stm>

Ontario Public Housing Tenant Mould Problems:

<http://www.ontariotenants.ca/health/black-toxic-mold.phtml#toxicmold>

The Vancouver Sun Article-Vancouver Public Housing Mould Problems:

<http://www.ontariotenants.ca/articles/2001/vs-01i14.phtml>

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mark Foster
Vice President, Sales and Marketing
519.925.5915
mark@bluwoodcanada.com