

SAFE REMOVAL OF MOLD-CONTAMINATED STRUCTURAL BUILDING MATERIALS

- **BEFORE MAKING REPAIRS.** The first step in mold control is to repair the leak or get rid of the source of moisture that caused the mold problem. If you do not eliminate the water source, the mold problem will return.

- **CAUTION:** Persons with known allergies to mold, with chronic lung conditions or weakened immune systems should not do mold clean-up. Do not allow unprotected bystanders, especially young children or the elderly in the clean-up area.

1. WET DOWN POROUS MATERIALS BEFORE REMOVAL

- Wear old clothes that can be thrown away or can be washed in hot water with bleach.

- Block off the area from the rest of the house by closing doors or hanging disposable plastic over doorways. Open a window and use an exhaust fan to the outside. **Do not allow the mold-contaminated air to circulate to the rest of the house.** Turn off the heat, swamp cooler, or air conditioner and cover the return air ducts with plastic.

- Wear goggles, rubber gloves, and an N-95 respirator during clean-up. (See pages 8 and 9 of the [EPA booklet](#).)

- Cover the floor with disposable plastic drop cloths. Make an exit path to the trash by placing disposable plastic drop cloths on the floor.

- Remove any wallboard (dry wall, sheet rock) that is wet or moldy. Remove a small portion of undamaged wallboard, paneling, or ceiling tiles, and check to see if there is hidden mold on the backside, especially if you smell mold but can't find it. If there is moldy fiberglass or blown-in cellulose insulation in the walls, it must also be removed. Look behind wallpaper as mold often grows on wallpaper glue. Check the carpet pads and the backs of carpets for mold.

- Use plain water in a spray bottle to wet down porous material (such as sheet rock, insulation, plaster, ceiling tiles, particle board, and paper products) before removal. This will help to reduce spreading the mold spores throughout your home.

Note: Do not wet down carpets/carpet pads before removal, as this would make them too heavy to carry out. Mist carpet/carpet pads **lightly** with the cleaning solution. Then roll them up in place and encase them in plastic before carrying them out of the house.

- Place the wet, mold-contaminated items that you want to throw away, in plastic trash bags. Close up the bags and carry them out of the house to the trash using your covered exit path.

(over)

2. STRUCTURES THAT WILL REMAIN IN PLACE

- Always check under wallboard, ceiling tiles etc. to see if the structures underneath are contaminated with mold. If you decide to leave the beams and studs in place because they are structurally sound and do not show any signs of wet rot, clean them by scrubbing them with a household cleaner **or** a bleach solution. If you use bleach, follow these steps:
 - Always handle bleach with care. Do not mix it with anything except water. **Never mix bleach with other household cleaners, soap, or ammonia** – this can make toxic fumes.
 - **Do not use straight bleach.** Mix 1 cup of bleach with 1 gallon of water in a bucket, and apply this solution to the surfaces you wish to clean.
 - Bleach can irritate the eyes, nose throat and skin. Be sure to vent the air to the outside.

- Remember to wear your rubber gloves, protective clothing, goggles, and an N-95 respirator to protect you from breathing in the stirred-up mold particles.

- Thoroughly scrub the area to with a disposable scrub brush, sponge, or a rag to remove all of the mold. Collect any run-off water with a wet/dry vacuum, or disposable sponges or rags.

- Let everything dry out completely before making repairs and putting up new insulation, ceiling tiles, wallboard, etc.

- **Do not reuse any of the drop cloths after the clean-up is finished.** The spores and mold particles can still cause health problems, as some people can have allergic reactions to mold spores and particles – even dead ones.

- Discard your clothes if possible, or wash them in hot water with bleach in a separate load.

3. REMAIN ON MOLD ALERT

- After the repairs are made, continue looking for signs of mold growth. If mold returns, repeat the cleaning and repair steps. Re-growth of mold may signal that the leak or moisture problem hasn't been fixed.

Updated 10-13-04