Montclair State University Facilities

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

Facts and Guidelines About MOLD

How to Report Suspected Mold on Campus

Resident Students

If at any time mold is suspected within any residential space, residents should report their findings immediately to their **Community Director** via e-mail. That will begin the coordination to inspect, clean and remediate any area as quickly as possible.

If you do not know your Community Director's contact information, please refer to the Residence Life website under the Contact Us tab at the bottom of the page.

www.montclair.edu/residence-life/

Faculty, Staff and Other Campus Constituents

Please contact the **Office of Environmental Health and Safety** at ehs@montclair.edu

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

Source: NJ Department of Health Environmental Health
www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/mold/learn-about-mold

What is Mold and How Does It Grow?

Molds are naturally occurring fungi that can be found anywhere. Many different species of mold exist in New Jersey. Molds help break down dead materials and convert it back into organic matter which can be used by living organisms.

Molds grow by digesting and destroying the material they grow on. Molds can grow on virtually any substance, as long as moisture, oxygen, and an organic source are present.

Understanding Mold

Molds grow in colonies and growth may take on different shapes and colors. Some molds may appear circular in growth while others may grow and spread to cover an area. Molds may appear brown, yellow, green, or black in color. The appearance depends on the species of mold present.

Excessive moisture is a key ingredient which causes molds to grow. Sources of excess moisture may be:

- **Plumbing Leaks**
- **Leaking Roofs or Windows**
- **Flooding**
- **High Humidity**
- **Condensation Inside Walls due to Poor Insulation**

Showers or even cooking can also add moisture to the air in your residence. The amount of moisture that the air can hold depends on the temperature of the air. As the temperature goes down, the air is able to hold less moisture. This is why, in cold weather, moisture condenses on cold surfaces (for example, drops of water form on the inside of a window). This moisture can encourage biological pollutants to grow.

As molds grow on building materials they may become destructive. Molds may grow unnoticed, above ceilings, behind walls, in attics and basements or in crawl spaces. Molds can cause staining of walls and ceilings and can begin to break down the studs and joists of buildings causing extensive property damage.

NJ Dept. of Health Information About Mold

www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/environmental-occupational/mold/index.shtml

Montclair State University Policy on Mold and Mold Remediation

www.montclair.edu/facilities/our-services/environmental-health-safety/environment-safety/

How You Can Decrease Mold Exposure

- **The key to mold control is moisture control.**
- **If mold is a problem in your residence, the mold should be cleaned promptly *and* the water problem must be fixed.**
- **It is important to dry water-damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.**

Keep Your Bathroom Dry!

Mold and mildew can't grow where it's dry. Reduce dampness in your bathroom.

- Start your ceiling fan when you turn on the shower so excess moisture moves out of the room. Keep the fan running at least 15 minutes after you turn the shower off.
- Wipe down the shower and tub as soon as you're finished. A cloth is good at getting to the tile grout and in the corners where mold has a tendency to start.
- Use a washable shower curtain. Skip the vinyl or plastic. Wash it in hot water, run it through your machine's spin cycle to remove excess water, then hang it up to dry in the shower.
- If you have a non-slip mat in your shower, you will need to wash it regularly.
- Keep your shower clean with a good non-toxic cleanser. Don't forget the ceiling above the shower. Dry it with a rag or towel when you finish washing it.
- Immediately report leaky faucets and showerheads to your **Community Director**. Stop the drips to limit mold and mildew around drains.

What We Do to Address Mold Contamination at Montclair State University

Although there are no EPA regulations or standards for airborne mold contaminants, there are microbiological benchmarks or assessment guidelines. Therefore, in the event that we discover mold on campus, Montclair State University's policy is to follow EPA's recommended protocol for *Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings*, the guidelines of the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), and other guidelines from professional and government organizations. While not required by EPA, as a quality control measure, air testing may be done (before and after remediation) to confirm that once the remediation is complete the concentration of spores inside the area is lower than outdoor/background levels.

In most cases, EH&S does not recommend sample collection and analysis when visible mold is present in an occupied building.

If mold growth is visible, then remediation should be performed. The standard for a completed remediation project will be no visible signs of mold present within the work area.

Montclair State University Mold Remediation Guidelines www.montclair.edu/facilities/our-services/environmental-health-safety/environment-safety/

Health Concerns About Mold

Who is at the highest risk for health effects from mold exposure?

- **Individuals who have pre-existing health conditions (allergies and lung conditions such as asthma or emphysema)**
- **Infants**
- **The Elderly**

Molds emit spores and chemicals as part of their normal life cycle and some individuals may exhibit reactions when exposed to these materials. Molds are microscopic and, once airborne, can easily be inhaled. Spores may contain allergens that can cause irritation to the nose, throat and respiratory tract.

In addition to allergens, molds may emit microbiological volatile organic compounds (MVOC's). These chemicals usually have a strong and unpleasant odor and are associated with the musty smell that individuals equate to mold being present. These chemicals, when released into the air, can be inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin. When inhaled, they can cause allergic reactions. MVOC's have also been linked to headaches, nausea, dizziness and fatigue.

Montclair State University Office of Environmental Health and Safety
ehs@montclair.edu