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COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## Environmental Health

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### MOLD ISSUES FOR LANDLORDS & TENANTS

*Cooperation between tenants and landlords is essential if a mold problem is to be corrected promptly and properly.*

- Both parties should read the handout “There’s Mold in My House--What do I do?” and follow the recommendations as closely as possible. Please remember that solving a mold problem is not solely the landlord’s responsibility nor is it solely the tenants. Both parties must do what they can.
- A tenant must report any leaks or moisture problems immediately to the landlord. In the event of flooding (such as from a hot water heater, etc.) steps must be taken as soon as possible to begin drying out the carpet and carpet pad as molds may begin growing within 24-48 hours. Prevention is critical as molds are extremely difficult to remove from porous materials (such as carpets, drapes, upholstered chairs, etc.) once they have become established.
- Landlords are responsible for correcting leaks (from plumbing, around the windows, through the roof, etc.). They are also responsible for replacing building materials where the mold has become invasive and cannot be washed off.
- Tenants are expected to wash window sills and walls (within reason, of course). Tenants are not expected to wash bedroom walls weekly to keep mold under control. If mold is reoccurring at that rate it is an indication that there is a problem, which needs to be corrected. It is also not reasonable to expect tenants to not hang anything on their walls (pictures, posters, etc). Again, if the mold is that bad it is an indication that a problem exists.

Landlords should be aware of units that do not have central heat have a much greater chance of having moldy walls, in association with condensation problems. In these units there is generally one heat source such as a wall heater, which has little associated air circulation. In this situation it is sometimes difficult to get any heat or air circulation to the distant areas of the unit, which are generally the bedrooms. (This is especially seen in room addition or where the garage has been converted into a bedroom). In cases such as this, the problem is arising because of design flaws in the unit and it would be the landlord’s responsibility to make the needed adjustments (additional heat source(s), ceiling fans, additional insulation, etc.) to correct the problem.

## Hints for Clean-up

1. Use of blowers for drying areas. Don't immediately place blowers without first evaluating of the water damage situation. If water damage has been occurring more than a couple of days, more growth may be present and adding a blower could blow mold spores throughout unit. If mold is present it should be removed before bringing in the blowers.
2. To help prevent spore dispersal, mist moldy areas with water then cover with plastic or newspaper and tape off area before removal of the material (sheetrock, ceiling tiles, etc.).
3. When mold is growing on support beams, etc. which can't be removed, mold should be scraped off and the area washed and disinfected thoroughly. Wood may be shaved slightly if it is suspected that mold is imbedded in the surface.
4. Normal vacuums disperse mold spores through their exhaust so it is recommended that a HEPA vac be used. (HEPA vacs can be rented from many equipment rental companies).
5. It is recommended that porous materials such as drapes, carpets, pads, upholstered chairs and insulation that are visibly contaminated with mold be discarded as it is extremely difficult and expensive to adequately remove the mold from them.
6. Protect yourself and workers by providing personal protective equipment (gloves, half mask, and respirator) when appropriate.