

# MILDEW & MOLD PREVENTION

## DISCLOSURE

Mold growth can be dangerous to people and destructive to property. Owner/Agent provides housing as free from mold as reasonably possible. Behaviors of residents greatly affect the likelihood of mold growth.

Tenant(s) agree(s) to keep the rental unit in a manner that minimizes the likelihood of mold growth. Suggested methods to do that are listed on the reverse of this notice. Tenant(s) also agree(s) to notify Owner/Agent promptly of any mold problems.

## DEFINITION

Mold is a fungus, a sponge-like organism, in the same family as yeast and mushrooms. Mold is everywhere. Molds produce tiny spores that float continuously through the air, indoor and out. When mold spores land on a damp area indoors, they can begin to grow, particularly if the moisture problem is not corrected quickly. Molds can grow on wood, ceiling tiles, drywall, paper, carpet and foods. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores indoors. The most effective way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture. Unwanted moisture can be from a variety of issues: leaks in the roof or walls, water seeping into the basement, taking a shower, or cooking. If mold grows in a home, it must both be cleaned and the moisture problem repaired. Mold growth is unlikely if the humidity is below 40%.

## PREVENTION

To reduce mold and mildew, Tenant agrees to the following:

Keep the indoor humidity low by:

- Use bathroom fans during and for at least 45 minutes (preferably 1 hour) after showering or bathing. If no fan is available, open windows slightly for ventilation for the same amount of time.
- Use the exhaust fan above the stove whenever cooking or boiling liquids, if no fan (or if a recirculating fan exists that does not exhaust to outdoors), open a window slightly for ventilation during cooking or boiling.
- Use the fan in the laundry area during and for 20 minutes after using the washer (not the dryer if it exhausts outdoors), or if no fan, open a window slightly for ventilation.
- Open doors between rooms and to closets to increase air circulation.
- If moisture condenses on windows or walls, turn up the thermostat on your heat source.
- Cover fish tanks
- Do not keep excess number of house plants. Do not overwater the plants you keep.
- Keep the temperature above 65 degrees.
- Open several windows for at least an hour twice a week to change the air in your home.
- Dry any spills on carpets or rugs.
- If you have an air conditioner, be sure it isn't leaking.
- Use a dehumidifier if necessary.
- Do not use un-vented space heaters, such as kerosene heaters, indoors.
- Do not use your oven for space heating.

Prevent cold surfaces that promote mold growth:

- Raise blinds or shades as often as possible each day.
- Allow at least one inch between furniture and walls to warm all wall surfaces.
- Keep the indoor temperature at least moderately warm during non-summer months.
- Keep heat above 65 degrees Fahrenheit at all times, as low temperatures cause mold growth.
- Do not turn off the heat in any rooms (especially bathrooms).

Attend to spills or flooding:

- Immediately dry water that spills or overflows from showers/tubs, toilets, sinks, etc.
- Immediately clean up and thoroughly dry any spills onto carpets, rugs or floors.
- Immediately notify Owner/Agent of any excess moisture problems:
- Immediately notify Owner/Agent of any water leakage such as leaking plumbing, tubs, showers, toilets, or windows.
- Immediately notify Owner/Agent of any running water – plumbing, tubs, showers, or toilets.
- Check, clean, and dry window tracks and keep free from condensation.

## IF YOU SEE MOLD

Clean mold off hard surfaces as soon as possible. First use a detergent like Pine Sol or Lysol and hot water. Then disinfect with a mild bleach solution (one cup of bleach to one gallon of water). (Do not get bleach solution on carpets or floors, it can cause damage.) Finally, dry completely. Recent studies suggest bleach isn't enough for porous surfaces like sheet rock walls. Wash with TSP (tri-sodium phosphate) first (available at hardware and paint stores).

When you clean up mold, consider using an N-95 respirator (available in many hardware stores) to limit your exposure to mold and mold spores.

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## WHEN & WHAT TO REPORT

- Leaks anywhere; in the roof, gutters, walls, doors, or windows for instance.
- Water in the basement or crawlspace under your home.
- Leaking pipes or dripping faucets.
- Sweating pipes or toilets.
- Running toilets.
- Any reappearance of mold after you've cleaned and removed it.
- Any recurring dampness or moldy smell.
- Non-working fans.