

Prevent Mold

in your home or apartment

ABOUT MOLD IN BUILDINGS

Molds and fungi are naturally-occurring organisms that are found everywhere, both indoors and out. Problems occur when conditions indoors allow for mold growth. The primary culprit for mold growth is too much moisture. Maintaining your home or apartment to prevent moisture and promptly fixing any moisture problems will prevent mold growth.

Mold can be a health problem. Mold is a common trigger of asthma attacks. In Maine, 10% of adults and children have asthma, and many others have allergies to mold. Preventing mold growth will make your home healthier for you and your family.

For more information about mold, mold prevention, and mold clean-up, visit the Maine Indoor Air Quality Council website at www.maineindoorair.org or call (207) 626-8115.

Follow this simple two-step process to properly prevent mold growth in your home. Preventing leaks and moisture problems and fixing water damage quickly are the keys to preventing mold growth.

Step 1. Moisture Maintenance and Repairs

Perform these simple tasks to help prevent moisture problems:

1. Repair any leaks that let water into the home.
2. Ensure good drainage around the home:
 - Gutters and downspouts should be connected and clear of debris
 - Grade soil away, not towards, the building
 - Test drainage with a hose
3. Repair any plumbing leaks, including tightening clamps on washing machine connections. Vent all dryers to the outside.
4. Insulate cold water piping.
5. Install kitchen and bath fans that are vented to the outside. (Low-noise fans have a better chance of being used.)
6. Seal, caulk, and replace broken glass on old windows to minimize air leakage, or replace with new windows.
7. Replace any drywall, insulation, carpet/pad, and (if necessary) wood surfaces that have been wet for more than 48 hours.
8. Provide dehumidification in chronically damp areas, such as basements and crawlspaces.
9. Remove carpets from uninsulated basement slabs.

Step 2. Annual Moisture Inspection

Conduct a moisture inspection every year. Check the following areas for wet spots, condensation, leaks, or water stains (often an indicator of past leaks.) Insects and insect damage may also be a sign of water problems.

- Plumbing under sinks and in the basement
- Windows and doors
- Around tubs, showers, sinks, and toilets
- Roofs and attics
- Ceilings and walls
- Carpets
- Washing machine connections
- Basements and crawlspaces

A properly maintained and dry home will create a healthier indoor environment and reduce the likelihood of costly repairs.

