

# MOLD CONTROL

## TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING AND ELIMINATING HOUSEHOLD MOLD

Mold/Mildew is caused by excessive moisture. Too much heat and too little air makes it grow on cold surfaces, such as outside walls or windows. Mold can be found in a variety of locations within your home. Molds are simple, microscopic organisms that grow virtually everywhere - from the surface of foods to household plants and household materials like plywood, drywall, or fabric.

### Identifying mold growth is fairly easy. Look for the following:

1. Visible mold growth (discoloration ranging from white to orange and from green to brown or black).
2. Musty odor.
3. Discoloration of building materials in areas where water damage occurred, such as drywall and plaster or plywood.
4. Rotting material.

### Prevent mold growth:

1. Clean, disinfect, and dry surfaces.
2. Check for leaks; if leak is found, repair and clean any moisture damage caused by the leak.
3. Reduce moisture in the home by using source point ventilation for moisture producing areas, and low speed continuous ventilation for good overall moisture control.
4. Keep relative humidity in homes to between 40-50% year round. Keep temperature at 65 – 72 degrees, don't block heaters and don't use oven or stove to heat home. Keep doors to rooms open to heat home evenly.
5. Increase AIR flow circulation in home by opening windows and moving furniture away from walls; leave some space between furniture and walls, even a few inches to let moist air out.
  - a. **Living room and bedrooms:** Warm air in your home holds water and needs to be forced out. Heavy drapes also trap wet air. Open drapes and windows every day to air out these rooms. How long should you do this? Until the water on the windows and sills is gone.
  - b. **Bathroom:** Let moist air out. Open a window after use. Don't block the exhaust vent.
  - c. **Kitchen:** Open a window and let moist air out when cooking. Use the exhaust fan.
  - d. **Closets:** Mildew tends to grow in a closet, especially if it's next to an outside wall. Don't overstuff the closet. Leave the door open to air out, and put a *small* fan in for more air circulation.

## HOW CAN I GET RID OF MOLD / MILDEW?

When you remove mildew, it will come back unless you get rid of the causes. Don't paint over mold or your paint job will be ruined. Don't remove mildew until you fight out the causes and fix them. Then, you can scrub off mildew with commercial products. You can also make a home solution by mixing one cup of household bleach with one gallon of water. Note that bleach is hazardous so wear gloves and have good air circulation.

**Remember!** When there are more people and pets in the home, there's more moisture. When conditions are crowded, follow all above with extra care.