

# MOLD, MILDEW & WATER DAMAGE

## Health Hazards

### INTRODUCTION

Water damage occurring inside a building can be very disruptive and costly to occupants and/or building owners. Failing to deal with the issue quickly and correctly can result in negative consequences such as mold growth, mold discolored surfaces and odor problems. Molds and fungi can cause nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, wheezing or skin irritation. Some people who are sensitive can have allergic reactions as well as other potential health problems.

Molds and fungi require moisture for growth so it is very important to completely remove or thoroughly dry all materials damaged by a flood or other water intrusion. In general, if carpets, walls and ceilings are not dried within 24 to 48 hours, fungi will start to grow. Once the microorganisms proliferate it becomes difficult to prevent odor problems and adequately clean the furnishings. Application of biocides may not resolve the problem because molds and fungi may still cause an allergic reaction even when nonviable (dead).

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Report water leaks to Facilities Services or Maintenance for repair. Roof leaks and dripping pipes will lead to mold if not repaired and dried quickly. Also, ask Facilities Services or Maintenance replace ceiling tiles, wall board and any other building materials that have visible mold.

### MORE INFORMATION

The following resources provide useful information on mold:

- [CDC general mold FAQs](#) -- Center for Disease Control
- [More specific CDC mold information](#) -- Center for Disease Control
- [EPA mold information](#) -- Environmental Protection Agency



Ensure that plants growing in work environments are well maintained and not over-watered. Over-watering can promote the growth of mold in the soil and on the plant or container.

### WHAT FACILITIES SERVICES WILL DO

Following a flood, water leak or sewer system backup, immediate action is required to prevent microbial growth. Facilities Services will arrange for mitigation managed by companies specializing in mold abatement. A mold abatement plan should be written. Precautions should be taken to protect the employees against microbial and fungal contamination during removal and handling of water damaged items.

**Moisture Meter**  
is used to help detect hidden moisture within walls and other materials.

