

# A Safe Workplace

## A Workplace Safety and Health Manual for Your Community

Section: III-F	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 1 of 3
		Approved By: Harvey Bostrom
Subject: SWP-9	Mould	Effective: December 31, 2007
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Refer to part 36 of *The Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations*, Chemical and Biological Substances.

**PPE Required:** Gloves, approved respirator (not a dust mask), disposable full-body clothing, eye protection  
Note: PPE required varies depending on the square area of mould found.  
Refer to Cleaning Mould below.

### General

There are 20,000 different types of moulds. Moulds produce small spores that are carried by the air as part of the mould reproduction process. Both mould and mould spores are naturally present in outdoor air and can enter a building through any openings, ventilation systems and even on shoes, clothing, etc. It is impossible to eliminate all moulds and mould spores in the indoor environment.

### Mould Growth

Three conditions are needed to enhance mould growth:

1. The right temperature for growth: most moulds prefer the same temperature range that people do;
2. Nutrients or food: many building materials provide suitable nutrients or support for mould to grow, such as: Paper and paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles, wood products, drywall, dust, paints, wallpaper, insulation materials, carpet, fabric and upholstery; and
3. Moisture, water activity in a material or high relative humidity: the following can lead to a build up of moisture or directly allow water to leak into the building:
  - inadequate ventilation can lead to a buildup of moisture;
  - wall leaks due to landscaping, windows or gutters; and
  - plumbing leaks, condensation, roof leaks and high interior humidity from outside.

Different moulds like different moisture levels.

When spores drop on damp or wet surfaces, they begin to grow and will eat whatever they are growing on in order to survive. **Growth usually begins after 24 to 48 hours.**

### Health Concerns

All moulds have the potential to cause health problems (allergies). Toxins can remain in the environment long after the moulds are dead. Only a few moulds can invade living cells and cause

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Section: III-F	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 2 of 3
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disease (general only in people with immune system problems, the elderly and the very young)

There are three types of reactions that people can experience when exposed to moulds:

1. Allergic reactions: are the most common and typically cause hay-fever type allergic symptoms (eye, nose and throat irritation) and asthma;
2. Infectious disease: some moulds can cause or is capable or causing infectious lung diseases; and
3. Toxic reactions: can create many symptoms, such as the ones listed above. These reactions can range from mild to severe, depending on the amount and duration of exposure and the overall health condition of individuals.

### **Mould Control**

The only practical way to control/eliminate mould growth in a building is to make sure there is no standing water (no matter the amount) or excessive moisture in the air.

### **Prevention and Maintenance**

Council must ensure that the building inspections are thoroughly conducted, including areas that can lead to mould growth. All maintenance items should be scheduled in a timely way.

### **Emergency Plan**

Council should have an emergency plan in place to address any removal/cleaning of water from buildings (either from pipe breaks, pump failures or flooding). Water should be removed within 24 to 48 hours.

### **Finding Mould**

If mould is found:

- advise employees and council of the location of the mould;
- prevent any persons from being in the same area as the mould;
- all records related to mould contamination (types, location of problems, causes, removal plan, monitoring, employees exposed, etc. must be retained for 30 years); and
- any worker that has been exposed must be made aware of hazards of mould exposure.

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Section: III-F	Rules Procedures, Practices and Guidelines	Page 3 of 3
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### **Cleaning Mould**

#### **Area Less Than 0.3 Square Meters:**

**PPE: Disposable respirator, gloves and eye protection**

It is not necessary to vacate building, however people who are:

- immune-suppressed;
- have chronic lung problems; and
- are pregnant or just out of surgery

**should not be in an area during removal.** Wash with soap and water.

#### **Area of Removal of Between 0.3 and 3 Square Meters:**

**PPE: N99 Respirator, disposable clothing, eye protection and gloves**

- All surfaces of material to be misted
- All materials, that are removed, have to be in double 6 mil poly bags
- All contaminated poly and clothing have to be disposed of
- All surfaces have to be dry before reapplying gyproc and insulation
- No eating or smoking in work area
- Require visible signs warning of remediation work
- Use a 6 mil poly wall to isolate area from the public
- A HEPA vacuum and negative air is required
- All doors to have double flaps
- Only persons who are trained can do this work

#### **Area Greater Than 3 Square Meters:**

Contact the Mould and Asbestos specialists in the industry to handle identifying, removing and monitoring the area until such a time that it is deemed safe.