

MOLD: DANGERS, PROTECTION, CLEANING

KEY MESSAGES

- Wear personal protective equipment. Wear an N-95 respirator at a minimum, goggles, and protective gloves.
- Use portable generators carefully, outside and away from the home, to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning and fires.
- Ensure the mold cleanup is complete before reoccupying your home.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

- Put on the personal protective equipment described above to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin.
- Remove standing water and wet materials. Use a wet vacuum to remove water from floors, carpets, and hard surfaces. Dry your home and everything in it as quickly as you can – within 24 to 48 hours if you can.
- Open all doors and windows when you are working and leave as many open as is safe when you leave.
- Open inside doors, especially closets and interior rooms, to let air flow to all areas. Take doors off their hinges if you need to.
- Open kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanity doors; remove drawers, wipe them clean, and stack them to dry.
- Open the attic access to let air flow to the attic. Before you open the attic door, make sure nothing will fall on you.
- When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture. Do not use fans if mold has already started to grow, because the fans may spread the mold.
- Clean with water and a detergent. Remove all mold you can see. Dry right away.
- If you use cleaning products, do not mix cleaning products together. DO NOT mix bleach and ammonia because it can create toxic vapors.
- Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent mold from growing. Fix the water problem completely and clean up all the mold before you paint or caulk.
- Throw away items that can't be cleaned and dried. Throw away anything that was wet with flood water and can't be cleaned and dried completely within 24 to 48 hours. If you have precious items that you want to preserve, follow these guidelines from the Smithsonian Institute: https://www.si.edu/mci/english/learn_more/taking_care/mnm.html

(The above information is a summary from “Homeowner’s and Renter’s Guide to Mold Cleanup after Disasters” published by FEMA https://www.cdc.gov/mold/pdfs/homeowners_and_renters_guide.pdf)