



# Mold Inspections

## Mold Overview

Molds are a naturally occurring part of our environment. They play a pivotal role in the outdoor environment breaking down dead organic materials and keeping the environment healthy and productive.

In indoor environments the presence of molds may cause unhealthy conditions for inhabitants and can lead to the decay and destruction of building materials.

There are thousands of types of molds in our natural environment and none will grow without moisture. Molds reproduce by creating microscopic spores that can become airborne and enter our bodies through inhalation or ingestion.

If mold spores come in contact with moist building materials or interior fixtures such as carpeting or furniture they can begin to grow and multiply. They then begin releasing spores into the air that we breathe.

## Mold Inspections

Mold inspections for residential and commercial properties have become a common occurrence to safeguard the health and well-being of occupants and to protect the equity of building owners' investments. These inspections are frequently begun after a water intrusion has occurred, there are concerns by inhabitants, or a property transaction is in the works.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), molds produce allergens, irritants, and potentially toxic substances. The EPA also recognizes that mold exposure can trigger asthma attacks and according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) over 20 million Americans are affected by asthma.

Properly performed mold investigations protect people and investments.

## Hiring a Mold Inspector

A quality mold inspection will typically begin with a thorough visual inspection of the property. The investigator will be looking for any signs of current or past water intrusion since water or moisture is necessary for mold growth.

The inspection will look for moisture around plumbing fixtures, attics, crawl spaces or basements and anywhere else a problem may be present. As is sometimes the case with small leaks in plumbing in the wall cavities the moisture may not always be evident. In those circumstances the investigator may use additional tools such as a moisture meter, boroscope, or infrared camera to look for the moisture.



Depending on what the investigator discovers they may recommend taking air, bulk or surface samples to test for the presence of mold. It is imperative that the source of any moisture be identified and fixed to prevent future mold growth.

It is important to hire only experienced and qualified professionals for this important task. Be sure to also make verify that any samples that are taken are to be analyzed by an accredited independent laboratory such as EMSL Analytical, Inc.

## **Mold Inspections During Property Transfers**

Some property owners fear the consequences of a mold inspection before a real estate transaction. This fear is unfounded since mold inspections have become a common practice.

A properly conducted mold investigation provides an honest assessment, which in the event a problem is found, allows the building owner to rectify the situation and provide a clean bill of health for the building.

## **Resources**

### **American Indoor Air Quality Council**

[www.iaqcouncil.org](http://www.iaqcouncil.org)

### **American Industrial Hygiene Association**

[www.aiha.org](http://www.aiha.org)

### **California Indoor Air Quality Program**

[www.cal-iaq.org](http://www.cal-iaq.org)

### **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/mold/](http://www.cdc.gov/mold/)

### **EMSL Analytical, Inc.**

[www.emsl.com](http://www.emsl.com)

### **Indoor Air Quality Association**

[www.iaqa.org](http://www.iaqa.org)

### **LA Testing**

[www.LATesting.com](http://www.LATesting.com)

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

[www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/)

