



CAMPUS HOUSING OFFICE

How to Prevent Excessive Moisture in Your Room

According to the *California Department of Health Services*, this is important information you should know about Indoor Air Quality and what you can do to prevent excessive moisture/mold in your room.

What are Molds?

According to the *Department of Health Services (DHS)*, "Molds are simple microscopic organisms, present virtually everywhere, indoors and outdoors. Molds, along with mushrooms and yeasts, are fungi and are needed to break down dead material and recycle nutrients in the environment. For molds to grow and reproduce, they need only a food source - any organic material, such as leaves, wood,, paper, or dirt - and moisture. Because molds grow by digesting the organic material, they gradually destroy whatever they grow on. Sometimes, new molds grow on old mold colonies. Mold growth on surfaces can often be seen in the form of discoloration, frequently green, gray, brown, or black but also white and other colors. Molds release countless tiny, lightweight spores, which travel through the air."

How are you exposed to indoor molds?

"Everyone is exposed to some mold on a daily basis without evident harm. It is common to find mold spores in the air inside homes, and most of the airborne spores found indoors come from outdoor sources."

"People can also be exposed to mold by touching contaminated materials and by eating contaminated foods."

Can mold become a problem in your room?

"Molds will grow and multiply whenever conditions are right- sufficient moisture is available and organic material is present." Be on the lookout in your room for common sources of indoor moisture that may lead to mold problems:

- Flooding
- Leaky roofs
- Plumbing leaks
- Overflow from sinks or sewers
- Steam from shower or cooking
- Humidifiers
- Wet clothes or towels drying indoors
- Damp clothes and/or shoes in closets

"Warping floors and discoloration of walls and ceilings can be indications of moisture problems. Condensation on windows or walls is also an important indication."

Indoor mold growth is unsanitary and undesirable. Basically, if you can see or smell mold inside your room, take steps to identify the cause and contact Facilities Services to eliminate the excess moisture/mold.

Removal of Moldy Materials

"Clean up should begin after the moisture source is fixed and excess water has been removed."

"Spores are more easily released when moldy material dry out, hence it is advisable to remove moldy items as soon as possible."

"Disinfecting agents* can be toxic for humans, not just molds. They should be used only when necessary and should be handled with caution." Our trained janitorial and Facilities staff will manage the clean up and handle all disinfectants.

Responsibility of SMC	Responsibility of the RESIDENT
Stop the source of the leak or flooding.	When possible move wet items to a dry well ventilated area or outside to expedite drying.
Remove excess water with mops or wet vacuum.	Open closet and cabinet doors and move furniture away from walls to increase circulation.
Run dehumidifiers and window air conditioners to lower humidity.	Run portable fans to increase air circulation. Do NOT use fans if mold may have already started to grow more than 48 hours since flooding.
If water has soaked inside the walls, it MAY be necessary to open wall cavities, remove base-boards, and/or pry open wall paneling.	Do NOT turn up the heat or use heaters in confined areas, as higher temperatures increase the rate of mold growth.

"Disinfectants* are intended to be applied to thoroughly cleaned materials and are used to ensure that most microorganisms have been killed. Therefore, do not use disinfectants instead of, or before, cleaning materials with soap or detergent. Removal of mold growth from nonporous materials usually is sufficient. Wear gloves, mask and eye protection when using disinfectants."

"After thoroughly cleaning and rinsing contaminated materials, a solution of 10% household bleach (for example, 1 1/2 cup household bleach per gallon of water) can be used as a disinfectant. Using bleach straight from the bottle is actually LESS effective than diluted bleach. Keep the disinfectant on the treated material for the prescribed time before rinsing or drying; typically 10 minutes is recommended for a bleach solution."

How can you prevent indoor mold problems in your room?

Inspect your room regularly for the indications and sources of indoor moisture and mold (listed on the first page). Take steps to eliminate sources of water as quickly as possible. If a leak or flooding occurs, it is essential to act quickly by calling Public Safety at 925-631-4282.

Useful publications: (links to the following documents can be found at www.cal-iaq.org/MOLD/) *Molds, Toxic Molds and Indoor Air Quality*. Detailed overview for the legislature by the California Research Bureau.

Mold and Moisture. Appendix H in the U.S. EPA IAQ Tools for Schools.

Please contact our office with any questions or to report an issue.

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