
Stockton University

Division of Facilities & Operations

Department of Risk Management, Environmental, Health & Safety

Date: October 10, 2018

Notice on mold remediation within Stockton University facilities

What can the Stockton Community do to help?

1. Identify the potential water source in residential area or office space.
2. Evaluate and report on unsatisfactory climate conditions (such as high humidity) throughout interior areas (residential, offices, etc.).
3. Keep windows closed when air conditioning climate control is in use.
4. Keep window shades open during the day.
5. Contact Plant Operations through the [work order process](#), to identify the concern. Work orders are continuously monitored and are prioritized for response by the facilities team.

Specific responses performed by the Division of Facilities and Operations

- Immediate response to complaints of leaks and visible mold and wet spots.
- Custodial cleanup efforts, including the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recommended mold cleaning methods.
- Proactive and aggressive air filter changes to assure capture of airborne particulates and to stop reintroduction. Our Preventative Maintenance plan includes filter changes every 3 months.
*Filters used are MERV 8, ASHRAE rated, and remove pollutants as small as 3-10 microns. This includes mold spores which average 3-100 microns in size.
- HVAC staff and outside contractors working to review and improve our current systems.
- Qualified Health and Safety professionals conducting Indoor Air Quality investigations, including visual inspections, and investigations including deployment of manufacturer calibrated IAQ equipment.
- Frequent inspections inside buildings to identify areas which can be susceptible to mold formation.

Background information & basics in understanding mold

Molds are fungi that are found everywhere and are part of the natural environment. Many serve useful purposes such as breaking down organic matter in the outdoors. Molds are also useful in producing common products such as penicillin and cheese. Problems may arise when molds begin to start growing indoors. While it is IMPOSSIBLE to have a mold-free indoor environment, since there are thousands of species of mold, certain methods may need to be implemented to deter and control mold growth. Some methods that need to be addressed are: excess water or moisture sources, cleaning of interior surfaces, and controlling indoor air temperature and humidity.

Preventing excess water in buildings is critical to preventing mold growth. Some moisture problems in buildings have been linked to changes in building practices such as tightly sealed buildings with diminished ventilation. Other moisture problems include roof leaks, plumbing leaks, elevated humidity/temperature, and heating/ventilation/air-conditioning (HVAC) systems that are not sufficiently cooling the space.

Unfortunately, the summer of 2018 introduced sub-tropical weather to the Atlantic County area. This past summer the Atlantic County region experienced above average temperatures, humidity and rain levels. These extreme conditions included an average August temperature that was the second warmest since the year of 1895. As of late August, the National Weather Service reported 36 days which our Pomona/Galloway area received temperatures of over 90 degrees. This is double the same report from the previous year. In addition, the outdoor humidity has been at or above 60% for five straight months which is very unusual and makes indoor and outdoor atmospheres very uncomfortable.

Much concern has arisen involving the health effects of indoor mold. Typically, indoor air mold exposure does not present a risk of adverse health effects. Some exceptions include people with impaired immunity, AIDS, uncontrolled diabetes, those taking immune suppressive drugs, or people who are generally sensitive to mold. These people may experience symptoms such as nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, wheezing, or skin irritation when exposed to molds. These potential health concerns are the primary reasons to prevent and remediate excessive indoor air exposures to mold.

For more detailed information, and to find out if a person is sensitive to mold they should consult their health professional or local health department.

While there are currently no federal standards (EPA, OSHA, NIOSH) for indoor airborne concentrations of mold or mold spores, all efforts are being made to ensure a safe indoor air environment. Currently, The Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Program (PEOSH) does enforce an Indoor Quality Standard in New Jersey that addresses this issue, and we are following all provided guidelines.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the most important factor to determine whether you have mold inside of the facility is to determine if there is a moisture problem and visible mold is present. Mold cannot proliferate if it does not have water. If mold is found, the water source must be eliminated if the area is to be properly remediated. Once the water source is eliminated and the mold remediated, it will not grow back.