

### ***What is mold?***

Molds are forms of fungi that are found naturally both indoors and outdoors. Molds come in a variety of colors, including green, black, white, brown and orange. Mold sometimes appears fuzzy, but often appears in slimy streaks. When mold spores land on a damp spot, they may begin growing and digesting whatever they land on. Molds gradually destroy the things they grow on. Therefore, to avoid damage to building materials and furnishings, mold growth must be prevented.

Moisture control is the key to mold prevention. Molds need both food and water to survive; since molds can digest most things, **water is the factor that limits mold growth**. Molds will often grow in damp or wet areas indoors. Common sites for indoor mold growth include bathroom tile, basement walls, areas around windows where moisture condenses, near leaky water fountains or sinks and near fan coil units. Common sources or causes of water or moisture problems include roof leaks, condensation associated with high humidity improperly insulated HVAC systems, or chill water pipes not well insulated, localized flooding due to plumbing failures or heavy rains, and slow leaks in plumbing fixtures. In summary, bad plumbing, bad insulation, bad construction or badly designed cooling systems can provide the moisture needed for mold growth.

Sometimes mold has an odor. The odor is usually described as earthy or musty.

### ***How can molds affect my health?***

The most common health problem associated with mold exposure are runny nose, scratchy throat, itchy eyes, sneezing, and in more severe cases, wheezing and coughing. Wheezing is a serious symptom that may mean asthma, and should be evaluated by a health care provider.

Allergy symptoms from mold are more common in people who already have allergy problems. Some people report flu-like symptoms, dizziness and other non-allergic symptoms, but the cause of these symptoms is not known. Although molds can produce toxins ("mycotoxins"), research so far has not shown a connection between these and non-allergic symptoms. Mycotoxins are common in our grain-based food supply, and ingestion is the major source of exposure. Mycotoxins are considered relatively non-volatile and unlikely to be released into the air in sufficient quantities to cause disease. Currently, there are no environmental air sampling methods for detecting mycotoxins, nor are there any biomarkers to measure exposure to them.

Allergy exacerbation is the only significant and well-established risk from exposure to mold. All fungi probably produce allergens, but only a few of the hundreds of thousands of different kinds of fungi have been tested for allergenicity. It is estimated that fungal allergy is found in 10% of the general population and 40% of asthmatic patients. Allergic rhinitis is the most common allergic reaction to fungal allergens. It is often accompanied by itchy or irritated eyes or throat, and sneezing.

### ***Preventing Mold in the Home: What can I do about molds in my house/quarters?***

While it is impossible to get rid of all molds in your home, you can control/prevent mold by maintaining a clean and dry home/quarters. Here are some helpful tips:

**• The key to mold control is moisture control. Keep humidity below 60%, ideally between 30-50%. Exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathrooms help control moisture. Make sure those fans, as well as your clothes dryer, vent to the outdoors and not to a crawl space or attic inside the home/quarters.**

**• Keep heating and cooling systems clean. Change/clean filters.**

**• Keep temperature between 68-78F.**

**• Clean, dry or remove anything from your quarters that is water-damaged, particularly carpets and padding. It is important to dry water-damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.**

**• Ventilate attics, crawl spaces, and basements.**

**• Keep bathrooms dry and ventilated.**

**• Remove mold growth from nonporous items (such as glass, plastic, metals, and tiles) using detergent or soap. Moldy porous items are generally impossible to clean and should be discarded in sealed plastic bags.**

### ***If I See or Suspect Mold in My Quarters What Should I Do?***

If you notice a small patch of mold (a few square feet), then use detergent (or soap) and water to remove the mold. Look for the **source of the moisture** such as a leaking pipe, condensation of humidity on the wall from excessive showering, leaving the window open, etc. If a source cannot be identified, contact the Building Manager. The Building Manager will then contact the designated Building Services Provider. If there is no leak and the room environment is very humid or smells musty, then contact DPW Self Help and request a dehumidifier after identifying the issue with the Building Manager. The Building Services Provider/Building Manager will submit a DA Form 4283 to DPW identifying uncontrollable mold issues. Once submitted to DPW, the Garrison Safety Office will ensure the issue is evaluated and prioritized, so that proper abatement can be taken. Examine your quarters to look for the source(s) of moisture and the materials that the

mold is growing on. If you see mold in a common area of the barracks, notify your Building Manager and report the mold growth. The Building Manager **MUST** address the issue and will arrange to have the mold removed. **If you or anyone in your family suspect mold to be the cause of any health problems, go to your healthcare provider and get an assessment.**

***What can I do about molds in my workplace?***

Visible mold in your work area should be reported to your supervisor, who will bring it to the attention of the Building Manager and DPW. Mold in the work area should be removed, and causes of the growth, such as water leaks or high humidity must be corrected to prevent further mold growth.

***What if I have symptoms I think are related to mold?***

See a healthcare provider for an evaluation to determine whether your health problems could be mold related. You may be tested to determine whether you have an allergy to mold. If your provider suspects mold, contact your Building Manager who will then contact the Building Services Provider such as GOAM to inspect your family housing, and KOHOM for Barracks/SLQ to inspect your quarters. If not sure, please contact DPW Service Order Desk at 756-6068. DPW may contact the Industrial Hygiene Office after assuring proper functioning of building mechanical systems.

***For more information:***

Environmental Protection Agency:  
[www.epa.gov/iaq/biologic.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/biologic.html)

Occupational Safety and Health Administration:  
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/molds/index.html>

**Contact Information:**

**Army Family Housing:**  
**Contact GOAM Service Order Desk**  
**Comm: 031-654-4034**

**Barracks/Workplace:**  
**Contact Building Manager**

**SLQ:**  
**Contact KOHOM Service Order Desk**  
**COMM: 031-654-7896**

**Built to Lease (Bldgs 6021-6024):**  
**Contact Daelim Service Order Desk**  
**Comm: 031-8054-8371**



**Housing Elevator Bank Hallway**

# **Mold Prevention Actions for Home and Work**



**Directorate of Public Works**  
**U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys**