

WHAT TO DO IN EXTREME CASES



If the guidelines or techniques to remove mould aren't sufficient, avail yourself of the services of a professional to find the cause of the problem.

WHAT DO LANDLORDS AND REAL ESTATE AGENTS HAVE TO DO?

If the building presents humidity or mould problems, the cause has to be identified and removed. Sometimes, mould can grow due to the building's conditions or management, such as incorrect use of the central heating system or building and/or maintenance defects in the building. Insufficient insulation of the perimeter walls or a defect in the roof require targeted building solutions.

MOULD AT WORK

Health and safety regulations declare the all closed rooms must have sufficient thermal insulation, enough doors and windows to ensure quick airing, be dry and protected against humidity (Legislative Decree 81/2008, Chapter IV).

Work places with insufficient internal air due to the presence of mould can create health problems for workers as well as affect their wellbeing. The employer is responsible for all building renovations and changes to protect employee health.

WHO CAN I TALK TO?

- The owner of the building company who built your home within 10 years of work completion.
- A qualified technician to carry out a technical survey. Useful when demanding compensation from the builder, landlord, etc.
- *Local public health services*
In extreme cases, your local public health service can help. You can pay to be issued a certificate stating the insalubrious nature of the building. Said certificate is issued as prescribed by law and is not a technical survey. Also, it cannot be used to collect points for assisted building schemes. (I.P.E.S.).
- *'Servizio aziendale di Medicina del lavoro'*
Health and safety office for information on mould at work.
- *'Servizio Pneumologico aziendale'*
Pulmonology department. Visit when faced with respiratory difficulties due to mould at home or work. Your GP has to book a pulmonary visit for you or you can book it yourself at the 'Centro Unico di Prenotazione' kiosk.

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Mould and health

KNOW MORE

MOULD: GENERAL INFORMATION

'Mould' is a generic term which encompasses various microscopic fungi. These break down plants and contribute to creating humus. Mould is a natural component to be found in soil and both internal and external air currents.

MOULD AT HOME

Upon airing a room, the mould's spores travel upon the external air current into the room. This isn't worrying per se, unless the spores rest upon damp surfaces, which provide the perfect breeding conditions for them to proliferate.

CONDENSATION

Hot air absorbs a lot of humidity under the form of vapour; as soon as the temperatures drop in proximity to cold surfaces, the vapour liquefies and sinks into the surfaces, favouring the growth of mould.

This is what we call 'condensation'. The creation of mouldy areas and condensation water is linked to two factors:

- the low temperature of internal walls which depends on the building's thermal insulation and insufficient heating;
- the high humidity levels of internal air depends on the lifestyle of tenants and how the flat is kept, or can be created by accidents such as a leaking pipe or infiltrations caused by rain.

MOULD AT HOME

It's normal to have some humidity in a home, as it is produced both by people and by carrying out household chores. One person produces more than one litre of water a day by breathing and perspiration alone.

MOULD AND HEALTH

Poorly aired buildings with high humidity levels contain numerous natural pollutants such as pollen, plant spores, bacteria, etc. These originate from both outside and inside the building. People exposed to these conditions are subject to aerosol infections, asthma and allergies more than someone who lives in a healthy environment. Traces of mould aren't normally linked to health problems, however excessive humidity has been linked to a growing number of chronic asthma in children (WHO guidelines for indoor air quality 2009).

MOULD AT HOME: WHAT NOW?

Air the room more often as soon as you smell or spot a mouldy area. Mould on walls has to be removed as soon as possible with bleach or other products available on the market. Anti-mould wall coating can be efficient. Use with care and closely follow the instructions.

To eliminate the problem you need to find the main cause: at times, using the following guidelines is all that is needed.

PREVENTING MOULD

By paying attention to the following, you can avoid mould even in old and poorly insulated buildings.

Airing:
open windows and doors for a couple of minutes more often and depending on the current season.



Using toilets and showers:
always activate the ventilation system after a bath or shower or open the window straight after taking one.



Kitchen:
when cooking, keep the door closed and air the room. This will ensure vapour doesn't escape to the rest of the house.



Internal temperature:
heat all rooms in the same manner. For colder rooms, keep the doors closed to avoid that the hot and cold air mix, condensing on the cold walls.



Laundry:
hang your laundry outside the building. If not possible, air the room or use a tumble dryer. Always air after ironing.



Plants and flowers:
don't include too many plants and flowers in a room, or paired with other sources of humidity such as humidifiers.



Furniture:
move furniture from the external cold walls by some centimetres (5-10 cm), or furnish the room in a different way.



Dust:
remove dust from critical areas. Mould grows more rapidly on dusty areas.

