



MOLD AND REMEDIATION

Key Steps in Remediation

- 1. Fix the water or humidity problem.** Removing the water source or condition is vital to effective removal of mold and prevention of further issues.
 - Pump, sweep, or drain water from the building.
 - Remove wet furniture, carpets, and other household items.
 - Patch or fix leaky roofs and pipes, and broken windows.
 - Dehumidify damp/Humid areas (basements, slab structures, etc.) as needed.
- 2. Continue to communicate with building occupants, as appropriate to the situation. Be sure to address all concerns.** People in facilities need to report issues to appropriate contacts for maintenance and repair as soon as possible. Communicate information about repairs and plans, including reasons for delays or other barriers, so everyone is updated.
- 3. Completely clean up mold and dry water-damaged areas.** Cleaning up mold and water damage can take time but will help to prevent future issues. The drying process is extremely important because most microorganisms survive in moist/humid environments (wet or containing more than 60% relative humidity).
- 4. Thoroughly dry the building during the first 24 to 48 hours after the water enters the structure.** Use fans and dehumidifiers if it is safe to use electricity. Open windows to increase air circulation, ventilation and drying; or use dehumidifiers with windows and doors closed.

You can ventilate OR you can dehumidify, but not both at the same time. Try to ventilate first, then close windows to dehumidify the space.

It may be necessary to remove portions of walls, ceilings, and floors to completely dry out the house. Wallboard, fiberglass, insulation, and wall-to-wall carpeting that were soaked only with clean rainwater may be able to be saved — if they are dried properly and completely. Consider removing and replacing those materials to avoid future indoor air quality problems, especially if the drying process did not begin within 48 hours.

Continue the drying process until materials are thoroughly dry (not just to the touch), and humidity levels return to normal (less than 55% relative humidity). Humidity levels are important to monitor since microorganisms thrive in humid environments. You can purchase an inexpensive hygrometer to monitor the relative humidity.

24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

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5. **Clean all surfaces.** Thoroughly wash and disinfect the walls, floors, studs, closets, shelves, contents, and every part of the structure exposed to water (such as floods or broken pipes). Use bleach, mildew removers, and non-sudsing household cleaners and disinfectants such as quaternary, phenolic, or pine oil- based cleaners.
6. **Remove and discard items that cannot be dried and cleaned effectively.** It can be difficult to throw away water-damaged items, especially if they hold sentimental value. However, keeping certain items that were soaked with water could be harmful to your health, as they may be a source of microbial growth. Generally, discard wet materials that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried.
7. **Replace fiberboard, fibrous insulation, and disposable filters in your heating and air conditioning system if they contacted water.** The heating and air conditioning ducts will also need to be cleaned if they contacted water.
8. **If the job is too large for you to undertake yourself, you should consider hiring a professional.** This may include someone who can turn off the electric, oversee demolition, perform multiple types of work (demolition, contamination controls, ventilation, and cleaning/drying all before reinstalling new materials to ensure a safe environment for you to return). Select somebody who has experience, appropriate work credentials and insurance, and can do the job correctly. Keep in mind that depending on the extent of the work, permits may be required. Be sure to check with your local city, town, or county offices to be sure.

If you have questions or would like to get further information, visit delawarehealthyhomes.org or call the Environmental Health Toxicology Office at 302-744-4546.

Resources

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Mold Page, <https://www.epa.gov/mold>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Mold Page, <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Mold Information, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/indoorenv/mold.html>