



# Flood Recovery **ANSWERS**

SDSU Cooperative Extension Service

## Proper Cleanup of Mold

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### Detection of Mold

Molds can usually be detected by a musty odor, and discoloration of surfaces is common with mold growth. **The mold may be found in shades of whites, greens, browns, blacks or oranges.** Mold can also be found behind surfaces such as paneling and sheetrock and will grow on damp surfaces within a couple days at normal temperatures.

Testing for mold is not generally recommended as a first step. If you see or smell mold, you have a problem. Sampling for mold can be expensive and it is not necessary to determine what type of mold you have. All molds should be treated the same and regarded as potential health risks. People can experience health effects when exposed to mold even if it is dead, so it must be removed. Killing it by applying a biocide such as chlorine bleach does not minimize health risks. Cleaning, disinfecting and drying surfaces prevent mold growth

### Cleanup and Removal of Mold

- Materials should be dried as quickly possible; mold will grow within 24 to 48 hours.
- Anyone spending more than a brief time cleaning in a moldy environment should use a HEPA filter or N95 or 3M#1860 rated mask which typically will have two straps or TC-21C particulate respirator. Also, use gloves.
- Materials such as hard plastic, glass and metal can be cleaned and disinfected.
- Porous materials such as sheetrock (drywall) and insulation should be removed and discarded. Scrubbing may not remove mold growth on structural wood such as wall studs, so it may need to be removed by sanding.
- Remove the mold using a non-ammonia soap or detergent. **Never mix bleach and ammonia.** Always clean surfaces, removing the mold, before using a chlorine bleach solution. Bleach changes the surface color.
- After the mold is removed, disinfect the area using a chlorine bleach and water solution. If the surface is relatively clean, use a solution of ¼ cup chlorine bleach per gallon of water. The surface must remain wet for about 15 minutes to allow the solution to disinfect. Concentrations as high as 1-1/2 cups of bleach per gallon of water is recommended for dirty surfaces that cannot be thoroughly cleaned.
- Provide adequate ventilation during disinfecting and wear rubber gloves.
- Rinse the entire area with clean water, and then rapidly dry the surfaces. Use fans and dehumidifiers and air conditioners. If the outdoor air is dry, a window can be opened to help promote drying.
- Other products that kill mold are biocides. These biocides should have Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registration numbers on the bottle and instructions for the intended application.

*References: Remove Mold to Keep your Home Healthy, AE 1202, Ken Hellevang, NDSU Extension Service*