

Tips to Help Control Mold Growth in Apartments

Control moisture

- Wipe up any water spills onto the bath floor from the shower. Use a shower squeegee to wipe down tub wall after showering. Clean shower frequently; letting mold and mildew settle in at the shower can only increase the possibility of spreading mold spores.
- Avoid running humidifiers or letting a kettle boil for long periods of time; run the fan over the stove to remove steam when cooking.
- **Do not over-water indoor plants.**
- Clean up water spilled on floors or carpets.

Increase ventilation

- Even a little natural ventilation will limit mold growth. Open windows and blinds every day. Ventilate apartments frequently on warm and/or dry days to reduce the relative humidity in the apartment, especially in the kitchen and bathroom. Apartments that are warm, dark, not appropriately venting moisture created inside the unit and usually have the windows closed are much more likely to have mold growth.
- Run the bathroom fan at least 20-30 minutes after showering, open windows (if present in bathroom) and keep the bathroom door closed when showering.
- Overheating can contribute to mold growth. Keep apartment temperatures at 68-70 degrees or lower during the day and overnight, especially when not home. If security is a concern, the Village Office has window locks that allow a window to be opened a few inches but locked as well. (However, NEVER leave windows open and unattended; close and lock sliding doors and windows when you go out.)

Increase air circulation

- Use a small room fan to move air inside the unit. West Village units have fan only settings on the heater thermostat.
- Keep personal items & furniture a few inches away from walls to allow air to circulate. Problem areas include bathrooms, dark closets, cluttered areas along walls, and corners and windows.
- Do not pile lots of items on closet floors; do not store boxes of items under beds. It is best to have mattresses off the floor and slightly away from the walls. All these things restrict air flow and inhibit ventilation.

Remove moldy items

- Remove moldy items from closets and cabinets; dispose of moldy food or water damaged materials.

Clean-off visible mold weekly

- Wipe up visible mold with a clean sponge and household disinfectant, general cleaner or even soap and water. This will kill most molds. Be sure to dry area completely.
- **NOTE** – contact the Village Office at 510.526.8505 if:
 - there is extensive visible mold growth and you believe that cleaning this area will affect your health.
 - the mold continues to grow back in the same location.
 - See next section “Removing Visible Mold in Apartments” for more specific instructions.

Keep vents and vent covers clean and dust free, especially in the bathroom and the furnace unit.

- Vacuum dust and debris from furnace air return and bath fan grille covers.
- Vacuum the entire apartment regularly. This can help reduce airborne dusts and other allergens as well as limiting the amount of dust attaching to these vent covers.

- Call the Village Office at 510.526.8505 for service when stove hood or bathroom fans are not working or are in need of repair.
- Apartment furnace filters are changed twice yearly by maintenance staff. (Note: these are not HEPA filter units, nor do they provide constant filtration of air; they simply keep dusts from circulating via the heating system.)

Do not create new holes in walls

- Seal holes in walls and call in water leaks to the village office at 510.526.8505.

Removal of Visible Mold in Apartments

Listed below are recommended materials and procedures to be used to clean visible mold from building components such as walls, cabinets and similar hard surfaces. Use care if treating carpet or other fabric that has mold growth, as they need to dry out thoroughly after any treatment. Cleaning trouble spots like bathtubs and windowsills once a week will inhibit mold growth.

Tools and Equipment Required

- A drop cloth like plastic sheeting or a trash bag is most appropriate if a bleach solution is being used. Newspaper may be adequate for non-bleach solutions.
- A clean, new sponge (perhaps with a sturdy scrub pad on the backside)
- A dry cloth for blotting or wiping down any wet areas after treatment
- A bucket to rinse the sponge or rag
- Spray bottle with 10% bleach solution (1/4 to 1/2 cup bleach per quart of water) or a similar disinfectant or antimicrobial solution. Lysol and Clorox both make disinfectant wipes for this purpose.
- Sink for cleaning hands, face, and tools when treatment is complete; dump rinse water down the toilet

Protective Equipment

Use protection if you are sensitive to the bleach or antibacterial solution you have chosen. Some people are sensitive to bleach and it can irritate the skin, and respiratory system as well as cause eye damage, if it splashes into the eyes.

- Plastic or latex gloves
- Long sleeved shirt
- Eye protection

Procedures

- Keep children away while using any chemicals/cleaning products in the home.
- Open windows to provide natural ventilation. (If the window is the area affected, treat it first, dry it down and then open it for ventilation purposes. If the window is a fixed, non-opening window, open a nearby window in the same room.)
- Move furniture far enough away from the wall to access the mold, if necessary.
- **Lay down the drop cloth to prevent the bleach from discoloring a carpet or other belongings.**
- **Spray the mold area with the bleach or disinfectant solution.**
- Wait approximately 5 - 10 minutes to allow the bleach or disinfectant solution to work. If more than one area has mold, it may be a good idea to move furniture and lay down a drop cloth in another room or another area while waiting for the disinfectant solution to soak.
- Scrub with an abrasive pad or nylon brush if necessary (be sure the area is wetted with solution).
- Wipe the area with a dry paper towel or clean rag using a one-direction and blotting technique.

- **Re-treat heavy mold growth with the antibacterial solution and repeat steps bolded above.**
- Dispose of paper towels and drop cloths in a plastic garbage bag.
- Wash tools.
- DO NOT use the sponge for any other cleaning besides mold cleanup.
- Wash face and hands when finished.