Moisture and Mold in Your Home

Mold is everywhere. It is a natural part of the world.
• Without mold nothing would break down and decay.
• Mold eats what it lives on.
• Mold needs water to grow.
• Mold can cause damage to your house.

Moisture control is the key to mold control!
• Mold will grow in a home only when moisture is present.

You may have too much moisture in your home because of problems outside:
• Leaks from the roof.
• Leaks in siding and around windows.
• Gutters/downspouts draining too close to the house.

You may have too much moisture in your home because of problems inside:
• Ground sloping toward the house.
• Moisture entering through basement walls and cracks.

Poor Moisture Control

- Condensation Collects in Attic from Poor Ventilation
- Moisture Collects in Crawlspace
- Poor Slope and Pooling Water
- Unvented Stove
- Unvented Shower
- Unvented Dryer
- No Gutters or Downspouts

Good Moisture Control

- Good Ventilation in Attic
- Vented Stove
- Vented Shower
- Vented Crawlspace
- Plastic / Poly Vapor Barrier
- Dehumidifier
- Rain Gutters and Downspouts
- Good Slope
If you see condensation in your home you may have a moisture problem:
Examples of condensation are:
• “Sweating” on windows or toilet tanks.
• Moisture beading on walls or cool surfaces.
• Beads of water on cool pipes.

If you see condensation:
In Summer:
• Use air conditioners or de-humidifiers.
• Open doors and windows.
• Keep temperatures between 74-79 degrees.
• Turn on fans.
In Winter:
• Keep temperatures between 67-72 degrees.
• Increase air flow.
• Pull furniture away from outside walls to increase air flow.

Increase air flow (ventilation) to prevent condensation:
• Air flow is important for controlling humidity.
• Good ventilation takes the moisture from the kitchen, bathrooms and clothes dryer to the outside.

Good ventilation is also important in:
• Attics
• Crawl spaces
• Small spaces like closets.

What can you do about moisture problems?
• Fix leaks and spills within 24-48 hours.
• Clean up all water quickly no matter where it comes from.
• Keep the humidity in your home between 40% and 50%.
• Use exhaust fans or open windows when showering, cooking or running the dishwasher.
• Make sure all vents from dryers, stoves, bathrooms and heaters are connected to the outside.
• Gutters/downspouts should carry water 6-10 feet away from the foundation.
• Ground should slope away from the house.

Warning: Ventilation changes may affect dangerous radon and carbon monoxide gas levels in your home. Check radon and carbon monoxide gas levels in your home when you install exhaust fans. Install a carbon monoxide alarm and recheck for radon gas every three-to-five years.

For more information on mold, refer to the OIAQC Fact Sheets:
• Mold and Health Effects
• Mold Clean Up: Six steps to get rid of mold you see in your home

Internet Resources:
A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home
www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html

Mold in Homes, Minnesota Department of Health
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/mold/index.html

Local Contact Information:

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