

## PROVIDING HEALTHY HOUSING

Before renting a unit, the landlord is responsible for making sure the property “is fit for occupation by human beings and that it substantially complies with state and local building and health codes that materially affect tenants’ health and safety”

(Green v. Superior Court, 1974)

Exposure to moisture and mold is not healthy and can make a house not livable, especially for infants, children, elderly, and people with a weakened immune system. A person with HIV, a person with cancer and receiving chemotherapy, and people with respiratory issues (i.e. asthma, emphysema, COPD, and chemical sensitivities) are more likely to be affected by mold exposure.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF MOLD EXPOSURE

### Most Common

Wheezing  
Difficulty Breathing  
Nasal Congestion  
Eye Irritation  
Nose and throat Irritation  
Rashes

### Severe Cases

Headaches  
Memory Problems  
Mood Swings  
Body Aches  
Fever

## RESOURCES

The following websites are additional information on landlord and tenant responsibilities as well as mold facts.

### **The Dept. of Consumer Affairs in California**

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/index.shtml> (800) 952-5210

### **Environmental Protection Agency**

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/> (415) 947-8000

### **California Department of Public Health**

[http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Documents/MIMH\\_2012-07-05.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/IAQ/Documents/MIMH_2012-07-05.pdf)

Created in partnership with the following organizations:

City of Oakland, Building Services

Alameda County Public Health Department, Asthma Start

Alameda County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program,  
Healthy Home Project

Regional Asthma Management and Prevention



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## MOLD AND MOISTURE

### *Protect Your Family's Health*



**Informational Brochure  
for  
Tenants**

## MOLD PREVENTION

You cannot mold-proof a house, but you can make it mold resistant by addressing the conditions that lead to mold growth.

### Ensure Adequate Airflow

- Open windows.
- Open blinds or curtains
- Use exhaust fans.
- Move furniture away from wall.



### Eliminate Moisture Intrusion

- Notify landlord when
  - There are cracks in walls, around windows, and doors.
  - There are leaking water or sewer pipes or roof or flooding by outside water.

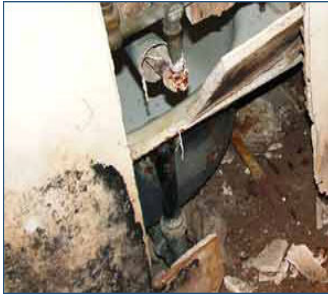
## CLEAN AND REMOVE MOLD

- Non-porous surfaces (i.e. counter tops, glass, plastic, metal) can be cleaned with water and mild detergent; rinse with water and dry thoroughly.
- Porous materials (i.e. dry wall, rug/carpet and padding, upholstered furniture, mattresses) need to be discarded.
- Do NOT paint or caulk over a moldy surface.
- Do NOT clean mold with bleach. It is an asthma trigger and can cause an asthma attack. **(NEVER mix bleach with ammonia. It will produce toxic fumes).**



## WHAT IS MOLD AND WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Mold is a fungus that is naturally present indoors and outdoors. Mold's function is to decay organic materials. Mold



produces small spores that travel through the air and grow on damp organic surfaces. There are three things mold needs to grow: 1) water, 2) food, 3) proper temperature. When mold is found indoors, there is sufficient moisture on walls and other surfaces for mold to grow.

**How much moisture does mold need to grow?** Indoor humidity of 55% or higher is ideal for mold to grow, and it only takes 24-48 hours to develop. Moisture can come from a roof or plumbing leak, air drying clothes inside the house, lack of air circulation, closed windows and heating or air conditioning systems.

### **What materials can act as food for mold?**

Any organic material such as wood gypsum, wallboard, insulation, ceiling tiles, paper products, dust, paint, carpet, and fabric (curtains).



**At what temperature does mold grow?** Mold can grow in temperatures between 40°F—99°F.

## INFORM YOUR LANDLORD



If you believe that your rental unit is in need of repairs contact your landlord with both a phone call and letter. In the phone

call and letter document the date, the damage or defects, how it is impacting your health and the required repair. It is recommended that the letter be sent by certified mail with a return receipt requested. **Keep a copy of the letter.** If the landlord does not make the requested repairs and can not give a good reason for not doing so, then you may have other options. For details see “Having Repairs Made” at <http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/index.shtml> or call (800) 952-5210 or call Oakland’s Code Enforcement for your options (510) 238-3381

Landlords can not legally retaliate or evict a tenant for exercising their legal right, or complaining about a problem. Tenants are protected against retaliatory eviction or other acts under the law. For details see “Retaliatory Actions, Evictions and Discrimination” at

<http://www.dca.ca.gov/publications/landlordbook/retaliatory-actions.shtml>.