MOULD

Water is the single biggest enemy of homes, whether it's from rain or melting snow, groundwater problems, poor grading, leaking plumbing or heating systems, dishwashers or clothes washing machines. Water can cause significant issues including the growth of mould. Mould spores are all around us, but if there is no moisture, mould does not grow. However, moisture creates an environment where mould can thrive.

WHAT IS MOULD?
- A common term for a large family of fungi with a cottony or woolly appearance
- A naturally occurring organism that grows in buildings where there is moisture, air, a food source, and temperatures between 40°F and 140°F
- When these conditions are not met, mould is dormant, but not eliminated
- Mould spreads by dispersing spores through the air and by growth on or within building materials

IS IT DANGEROUS?
- When moulds grow, they make lots of chemicals – allergens and toxins- however most mould is not harmful
- Moulds can be just a cosmetic nuisance
- A few moulds can also be dangerous, acting as allergenics to some individuals, while some are toxic to ALL and can be especially harmful to young people, old people, and people with respiratory problems or compromised immune systems
- Individuals may react to mould spores alone, meaning visible growth is not necessary to cause issues for sensitive individuals

HOW TO IDENTIFY MOULD
- Mould is difficult to identify since many different kinds of moulds look the same, meaning a black mould could be a cosmetic concern or a dangerous, toxic species
- Since experts recommend that all moulds be removed there's no need to try to identify the mould type
- Home test kits are also not reliable
    - Spores collected and "grown" in these methods could be dead, fail to grow on the culture medium, and still be toxic if inhaled
- Instead, have an expert survey your home, or send your own sample to a testing laboratory where aerobiologists or mycologists will examine the sample's contents

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MOULD REMOVAL

- Level I: For small areas of mould <10 ft^2
  - Most moulds on hard surfaces can be removed with soap and water, using gloves, glasses and a mask (Clean, rinse, DRY)
  - Remove and discard carpet, textured ceilings with mould and surfaces that remain stained
  - Wash fabrics
  - Infants, individuals who are allergic, asthmatic, elderly or immune-impaired should not disturb mould and should not be present where mould remediation is performed
- Level II & III: For large areas of mould 10 - 100 ft^2 and >100 ft^2
  - Both require enclosures and qualified individuals to do the removal (include use of negative air machines)
  - Professional assessment (can be done through CARSON DUNLOP)
  - Remediation companies (use many different techniques)

MOULD PREVENTION

- Mould is not always visible, therefore prevention is more effective than removal
- Mould needs 4 things to grow: spores, food, appropriate temperature and water
  - Spores, food from drywall/cellulose and temperatures >40°F and <140°F are ever-present within homes, therefore prevention must focus on moisture
- Remove moisture and address possible moisture sources
  - Correct leaks into or through roofs, walls, doors, windows, basements, plumbing or heating systems
  - Be aware of condensation from cooking, bathing, etc.
  - Air conditioning systems, humidifiers, dehumidifiers and sump pits are other areas where moulds often grow due to moisture

CARSON DUNLOP has partnered with qualified, reputable companies to provide many specialty services, including Mould Investigations and Indoor Air Quality Assessments, to complement our Home Inspections, targeting concerns outside the scope of a Home Inspection.

Additionally, CARSON DUNLOP offers Thermal Imaging Inspections, targeting concealed water prone areas of the home using a thermal camera and moisture meter.

For more information call 800-268-7070.