

Mold Myths And Facts

(NAPSA)—In a recent Ducker Worldwide Research survey, 86 percent of homeowners said that mold is a critical issue to them. Among 400 consumers surveyed, 74 percent said they have experienced indoor or outdoor moisture issues in their homes, while 44 percent said they have experienced mold problems. In a similar survey of builders and contractors, 43 percent ranked mold as the number one issue on their construction projects.

To help, the Responsible Solutions to Mold Coalition (RSMC) was formed through a grant by building materials leader USG Corporation. Its aim is to communicate science-based, accurate information on mold. RSMC is an industrywide coalition of building industry associations, companies, and government and academic organizations.

The coalition's key message is that if you control moisture, you'll control mold. While mold-resistant products can play an important role, unless they are installed properly as part of good building practices, mold can become a problem.

Consider these myths and facts:

Myth #1: Mold grows only on paper, wood and other organic materials.

Facts: Mold will grow on any surface, including glass, fiberglass and even steel. Mold needs three things to grow: 1) mold spores, which are always in the air; 2) moisture; and 3) a food source, which can be as simple as household dust. Houses are constructed using a wide variety of organic materials; as a result, the only effective strategy to control mold is to control moisture.

Myth #2: Mold can be eliminated.

Facts: Only "clean room" technologies—which are too expensive and unnecessary for the home or office—can eliminate mold spores. The one thing you can control is moisture. We all benefit from some molds, including the species that led to the development of penicillin. Mold plays a critical role in the processing of natural wastes



such as leaves, grass and branches, turning them into topsoil.

Myth #3: Mold is the only moisture control issue of concern.

Facts: While excessive moisture causes mold, it also fosters the growth of dust mites and bacteria, as well as attracts cockroaches and rodents. Moisture will ultimately damage finishes and otherwise shorten the useful life of any building. So not only does excessive moisture make a building less comfortable, it will ultimately diminish the building's value.

Myth #4: Only experts can clean mold.

Facts: Homeowners can clean small patches of mold using household detergents and warm water. Scrub any mold patch vigorously in order to remove mold spores that otherwise would remain and foster future mold outbreaks. After cleaning, rinsing and drying the spot where mold has grown, discard any rubber gloves and cleaning cloths used in the process. Larger patches of mold may need to be eliminated by trained professionals.

Myth #5: Once mold starts, it will always be present.

Facts: Mold can be stopped in its tracks, but only if moisture is minimized or eliminated. Consequently, leaks should be corrected as soon as they become apparent. Building experts urge homeowners to be aware of some of the telltale signs of mold, which include dampness, odors, discoloration, peeling paint, condensation, compacted insulation and actual mold outbreaks.

For more information on controlling moisture and mold, visit the organization's Web site at www.responsible moldsolutions.org.