



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Kidder County District Health Unit

Mold Safety

Flooding is the most common disaster in the U.S. and can cause a variety of problems to urban and rural communities. However, by utilizing these suggestions, you can learn how to stay safe before, during and after a flood.

DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?

If your home was flooded and you were not able to dry it (including furniture and other items) within 24-48 hours, you should assume mold growth. You must completely dry everything, clean up mold and make sure you don't have ongoing moisture problems. Mold may exist on, or in, clothing, drywall, furniture, cardboard, books, carpet, cushions or walls.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Exposure to mold can lead to a variety of health concerns:

- Asthma attacks
- Severe infections
- Eye irritation
- Skin irritation
- Allergic Reactions

BEFORE ENTERING A MOLD SITE

- Children should not take part in cleanup work.
- Check for loose power lines or gas leaks. Make sure electricity and gas are turned off.
- Look for sagging ceilings/floors or other structural problems.
- Be aware of wet/muddy/slippery floors.
- Be aware that dealing with a mold site may prove to be too difficult and/or dangerous for you to do the work. You may want to get help from qualified professionals.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Protect your mouth and nose with an N-95 respirator. If you are going to spend extended amounts of time in these environments, or ripping out moldy drywall, wear a half- or full-face respirator.
- Protect your skin by wearing protective (non-latex, vinyl, nitrile or rubber) gloves. Do not touch mold or moldy items with bare hands/skin.
- Protect your eyes by wearing goggles. Safety glasses or goggles that have vent holes will not protect you against dust and small particles.
- Be sure to shower and change clothing to avoid bringing mold and other hazards into your current living environment.





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WHAT TO WEAR

BEFORE ENTERING A HOME OR BUILDING WITH MOLD DAMAGE

CAUTION!

If you have a breathing problem like asthma, do not enter a building with mold damage. Mold can make asthma symptoms worse.

If you have a weakened immune system (such as from cancer treatment or medicines that suppress the immune system), do not enter a building with mold damage. People with a weakened immune system are more likely to get a serious illness from mold.

Children should also not enter buildings with mold damage.

MORE INFORMATION ON REMOVING MOLD:
www.cdc.gov/mold/cleanup-guide.html

MORE INFORMATION ON WEARING RESPIRATORS:
www.cdc.gov/disasters/disease/respiratory.html

MOLD SAFETY

- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Make sure you have documented damage with photos or video to satisfy any potential insurance claims.
- Remove standing water and wet materials. Use a wet vacuum to remove water from floors, carpets and hard surfaces. Dry your home within 24-48 hours, if possible.
- Open doors and windows when you are working and leave as many open as is safe/possible. Remove doors from hinges if needed. Open kitchen cabinets or bathroom vanity doors. Remove drawers, wipe clean and stack while drying. Open attic access.
- If electricity is safe and available, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture. Do not use fans if mold has already started to grow - this may spread mold.
- Clean with water and detergent. If you use cleaning products do not mix them. Do not mix bleach and ammonia as that will create toxic vapors.
- Painting/caulking over mold does not prevent it from growing. Clean or remove the effected area before you paint or caulk.
- Throw away items that can't be cleaned or dried.
- If utilizing portable generators, make sure they are located at least 20 feet from building interiors. Never refuel generators when they are hot.
- If you see or smell mold, you have more work to do. Do not reoccupy your home until mold has been completely dealt with. Be aware that after re-occupying your home, if you have asthma, allergy attacks, or skin/eye irritation, you may still have mold issues.

SOURCE: , ND Department of Health, CDC, EPA, FEMA, NIH