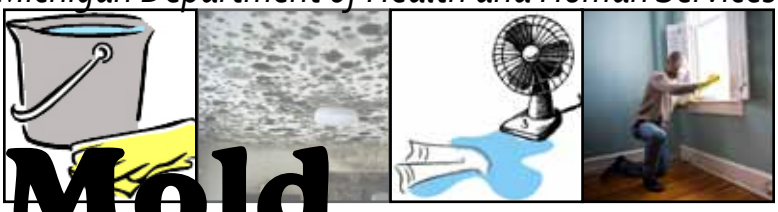
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Steps for Cleaning Mold



Before getting started, get to know MOLD:

Mend

There are many places you can find mold in your home. However, mold always needs a damp or wet place to start growing. If you don't fix the water problem, the mold will keep coming back no matter how well you clean.

Observe

Look around. Where is the mold growing? How much mold is there? If the area that is moldy is very large or you have health problems, you might want to hire a contractor to do the work for you. If the mold is growing on something that can be cleaned with bleach and water, and you do not have asthma or other health problems, you can probably clean the mold yourself.

Learn

Read the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' mold flyers to learn more about places in your home to look for mold, what your rights are as a renter or home owner, and how mold can affect your health. Get the flyers by going to www.michigan.gov/mold or calling 1-517-335-9436.

Disinfect

Follow the directions on the following pages to learn how to safely clean up mold on your own.

Mold Cleaning Kit

Things you will need:

long rubber gloves
(like dishwashing gloves)

goggles
(without holes or air vents)

N-95 mask
(you can buy at a local home improvement store)

a measuring cup

two buckets
(1 gallon size or larger)

2 sponges or rags

water

household bleach*
(do not use pool bleach)

DIRECTIONS

1. **Open windows, if possible**.
   Make sure you have a lot of fresh air. If you can't open windows, use fans to blow clean air from other rooms.

2. **Put on your gloves, goggles, and face mask.**

3. **Make your Mold Cleaning Mix.**

Mix 1 cup of bleach with 1 gallon of water in one bucket.

- Stir up the bleach and water with your gloved hand, being careful not to splash.
- Add one sponge or rag to the bucket.

4. **Fill the second bucket with <u>water only</u> and add the other sponge or rag.**

Be very careful to keep the Mold Cleaning Mix away from kids and pets.

☠ NEVER MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA. ☠

*If you or others in your home have asthma, you should <u>not</u> use bleach. Please contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at 1-517-335-9436 for other cleaning options.

Getting Ready to Clean

Sort everything that is moldy into two groups:

Things that water CAN'T soak into:	**Things that water CAN soak into:**
linoleum floors	carpet
stoves	couches
sinks	stuffed animals
plastic toys	clothes
tile walls	wood
metal	drywall
and more...	and more...

DIRECTIONS
to clean things that water CAN'T soak into

1. **Put together your Mold Cleaning Kit.**
2. **Apply the Mold Cleaning Mix.**
   Wipe the mix onto the things that are moldy using your sponge or rag. If the items are small enough, you can soak them directly in your bucket of Mold Cleaning Mix.
3. **Let the items sit or soak for 10-15 minutes.**

4. **After 10-15 minutes, rinse the things using plain water.**
5. **Dry everything very well.**
   Use towels or fans to blow on the things and area you cleaned.
6. **Repeat if necessary.**
   You may need to do steps 2-5 again if the mold is still there.
7. **If the mold still cannot be removed, you should consider throwing the items away.**

Remember that the bleach might discolor some items, so test the Mold Cleaning Mix on a hidden area before using it on the entire item.

Bleach should not be used on metal objects. For these items, wipe the mold off with a mix of warm water and dish soap.

DIRECTIONS
to clean things that water CAN soak into

Small Things

If the item is small enough that it can fit in a washing machine and can be safely washed, try washing it on a HOT water cycle with your regular laundry soap.

Dry everything very well.

Do the items still smell like mold or dirt?
Can you still see the mold?

If so, you should throw it away. If not, it should be OK to keep it.

Big Things

Has everything been wet for <u>two days or MORE</u>?

If you answered yes, you will probably need to throw those items away. This includes carpet and couches. Mold is already growing, even if you can't see it yet, and could cause health problems later.

Has everything been wet for <u>LESS than two days</u>?

As long as you don't see any mold growing already, try to soak up as much water as you can with towels or a wet/dry vacuum (like a Shop-Vac, for example).

Open your windows or turn on your air conditioning or heat blowers to get fresh air moving through the area where the wet things are found. If you have a fan, use it to blow fresh air directly on the wet area.

You need to dry everything as fast as possible.

Wood and Drywall

While wood and drywall feel hard, water can still soak into it. This means mold could be growing inside your walls where you can't see it.

If there is a lot of mold on your walls or ceiling, the BEST thing to do is to cut it out and replace the section.

You might want to hire a home contractor to do this, especially if the mold has grown on the wood and support beams inside the wall.

Removing the wood or drywall is the only way to be totally sure you get rid of all of the mold. However, if you prefer to try cleaning it, see page 6 for instructions.

About hiring a home contractor

If you decide to hire someone to remove and repair damage caused by mold, it is recommended that you use a *home repair contractor*.

A home repair contractor is usually cheaper than a *mold remediator*, or someone that only repairs homes with mold, because they do not do all the testing that mold remediators do. Testing for mold is not needed and only adds to your cost.

A regular home repair contractor is capable of cleaning and repairing your home after a problem with mold.

Note that the State of Michigan does not license or certify companies for mold clean-up.

mold on a wall

mold inside a cabinet

mold on a wall and carpet

Cleaning the wood or drywall yourself

If the area that is moldy is small (the US Environmental Protection Agency suggests an area smaller than 3 feet by 3 feet), and you do not want to cut it out of the wall, you can first try to clean the wood or drywall yourself with the Mold Cleaning Mix (see directions on page 2). If the mold comes back again after you try to clean it, then you will need to cut out the drywall.

DIRECTIONS

1. **Put together your Mold Cleaning Kit.**
2. **Wipe on the Mold Cleaning Mix.**
   Wipe the Mold Cleaning Mix onto the wood or drywall using your sponge or rag. Remember that the bleach might discolor some items, so test it on a hidden area first.
3. **Let the Mold Cleaning Mix soak into the wood or drywall for 10-15 minutes.**

4. **After 10-15 minutes, wipe the wood or drywall with the plain water.**
5. **Dry the wood or drywall well.**
   Soak up as much water off the wood or drywall as you can with towels, and if possible use fans to blow on the area to dry it as quickly as possible.
6. **After the wall is dry, you can re-paint the area.**
   There are special paints available that are advertised to cover mold stains. Talk to your local paint supplier to find the paint that best meets your needs.

Is more information available?

Yes! Contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at 1-517-335-9436 or visit www.michigan.gov/mold for these other fact sheets:

- **All About Mold**
- **Mold and Your Health**
- **Mold and Renter Disputes**
- **Mold and Home Owners**
- **All About Mold (for Health Care Providers)**

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