Mold Fact Sheet

The University of Maryland is committed to providing a work environment that is free of recognized hazards and to investigate complaints which may be related to mold growth on building materials.

Why does mold grow on building materials?
Mold is always present in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Mold grows best in warm, damp, and humid conditions and reproduces by spores. Spores can remain viable under harsh environmental conditions, including dry conditions, which normally do not support mold growth.

The growth of mold in an indoor environment requires three basic elements: food, water, and climate. Buildings provide a suitable climate and food sources (primarily wood and paper products) for mold to grow. Uncontrolled sources of water lead to nearly all mold-related problems and are typically the result of a building envelope and/or mechanical system failure. The key to controlling mold growth on materials in the indoor environment is moisture control. This includes maintaining moderate relative humidity levels indoors. All floods and/or water intrusion should be promptly reported to ESSR for evaluation.

Are there any regulations regarding mold?
To date, there are no regulations directly governing the presence of mold or mold spores in buildings in the State of Maryland. There are also no health standards for mold spores in the indoor air.

Professionals and professional organizations agree that the presence of visible mold on indoor building materials is an unacceptable condition that should be corrected. The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) has stated that visible fungal growth in indoor environments is inappropriate and may cause exposure leading to adverse health effects.

How does mold affect people?
Some people are sensitive to mold. Exposure can cause allergy-like symptoms (nasal stuffiness, eye irritation) and/or skin irritation. Depending on your sensitivity, these reactions could be more or less severe. Mold may also exacerbate asthma. Building occupants who are concerned about their reaction to mold in the indoor environment are encouraged to consult with their physician. The primary physician may determine a specialist is needed, such as an allergist. If the physician suspects the work environment may be a contributing factor, please contact ESSR for a site evaluation.

What can I do if I’m concerned about mold in my workplace?
If you are concerned about mold in your workplace, contact ESSR for a site evaluation. ESSR will survey the area(s) of concern, interview employees, and provide recommendations.

If you have further questions about mold, please contact the Department of Environmental Safety, Sustainability and Risk at 301-405-3960.

ESSR service request link: https://www.ESSR.umd.edu/apps/other/service.cfm