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MOLD AND FLOOR COVERINGS

The consensus points in the mold remediation field can be used to provide specific direction to floor covering professionals. The first question that is often asked is the simplest one to answer. If there is visible fungal growth on carpeting it is recommended that the contractor remove the carpeting, it is recommended that a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) be contacted to inspect and prepare a scope for method for remediation. Numerous studies have shown that it is difficult to remove the entire mold growing on carpet without damaging the carpet or costing so much as to make it financially impractical.

Take extra caution when removing carpet with visible mold to avoid cross contamination. Isolate the room where the carpet is to be removed by installing plastic containment barriers at the doorways and over the HVAC vents. Cut the carpet into pieces small enough to be bagged or wrapped. Seal the bag or wrapped carpet and padding before moving the material through the building to the dumpster. The workers should be protected with appropriate (PPE), personal protective equipment.

Carpeting contaminated through airborne deposition can be effectively cleaned; however, if the carpet is in an area where it may be further damaged during the remediation process, consider removing it after it is cleaned so that it can be saved for reinstallation. The preferred cleaning method in cases where carpeting has been impacted by the settling of airborne spores is a three-step process often referred to as a HEPA sandwich (if scoped by CIH, for method of cleaning). Vacuum the carpeting with a HEPA vacuum, and then perform a hot-water extraction with a commercial carpet cleaner specifically designed with an antimicrobial as a part of the solution. This will kill viable mold spores and bring a majority of the remaining non-viable spores to the surface. After the extraction and drying, vacuum the carpeting again with a HEPA vacuum.

As odd as it may seem, mold contamination is often found in conjunction with floor tiles, linoleum and even hardwood floors. Since mold does not need light to grow, it will prosper anywhere there is appropriate water, food and temperature. As result, mold has been found under hard and carpet floor tiles, sandwiched by sheet flooring and the underlayment, and between hardwood and the subfloor. In such cases, the only option really is controlled removal of the top layer so that appropriate cleaning can be accomplished.

Mold contamination of flooring materials can be significant problem. Floor covering professionals understand that a timely and reasonable response that is in line with the consensus that has developed regarding mold can keep such situation from turning into a financial and legal disaster.

To learn more on mold remediation please refer to our CE class scheduled for March 27, 2009, Topics "Mold and Mildew Remediation" and "Understanding Texas Mold Regulations"

Gerloff Company Inc. certified instructors also provide on the road training. We will come to you. Just visit the Web Site, pick your CE topic, contact Drew A Van Wyck, Marketing Director for scheduling. (dvanwyck@gerloffinc.com). We are available at your request.

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