

# Mold Cleanup in South Carolina after Hurricane Helene

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South Carolinians whose homes were affected by Hurricane Helene may be facing mold issues and should be on the lookout. Excess moisture and water can contribute to mold growth, which should be addressed safely to reduce the risk of adverse health impacts and further property damage. This fact sheet will cover the mold issue, associated risks, tips for cleaning, and additional resources.

## Where Can I Find Mold

Mold can be found everywhere, indoors and outdoors. It will grow in places with a lot of moisture, such as around leaks in roofs, windows, or pipes, or where there has been flooding. Mold also grows well on paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles and wood products. Additionally, mold can be found in dust, paints, wallpaper, insulation, drywall, carpet, fabric and upholstery.

If your home experienced flooding, you may see or smell mold or it may be hidden under or behind items like flooring, appliances or walls.

## Problems Associated with Mold

- **Medical:** Mold may cause problems with allergies, asthma, infections, and other respiratory issues. Common symptoms include itchy eyes or skin and respiratory complaints, such as a stuffy nose and wheezing.
- **Structural:** Mold damage can jeopardize the structural integrity of a building, so exercise caution while assessing your property. If mold is found in your home, everything that has been contaminated must be cleaned and dried. Items that cannot be properly cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours must be discarded, including building materials and personal property. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work.

## How To Clean Mold Safely



Mold removal and home repairs may be difficult or dangerous, so it may be best to get help from a professional. If you must remove the mold yourself, follow these tips:

- **Protect yourself.** Put on personal protective equipment, such as protective eye masks or goggles, filter face masks (like an N95 respirator), gloves, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and waterproof boots to help you avoid contact with mold.
- **Air it out.** Clean and dry the structure as quickly as possible. Open doors and windows to let the house air out for at least 30 minutes before you stay for any length of time. You should also open inside doors, especially closets and interior rooms, kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanity doors. Keep all doors and windows open when you are working and leave as many open as you safely can when you leave.
- **Circulate.** When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to help remove moisture.
- **Remove all contaminated materials:** Remove and dispose of anything that was wet and can't be cleaned and dried completely.
- **Clean:** Clean with soap and water. Remove all mold you can see. Dry right away. After you finish cleaning the home, shower and change your clothes as soon as possible to avoid carrying mold to your current living quarters.
- **Don't mix cleaners.** If you use cleaning products, do not mix them. Mixing bleach and ammonia can create toxic vapors.
- **Prepare to repair:** Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent it from growing. Fix the water or moisture problem completely and clean up all mold before you paint or caulk. Remove all mold and disinfect everywhere mold was present before you begin repairs.

## Additional Resources

- [Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters | CDC](#)
- [Mold Cleanup Guidelines and Recommendations | Mold | CDC](#)
- [Mold Cleanup in Your Home | EPA](#)
- [Mold and Health | EPA](#)
- [Ten Things You Should Know about Mold | EPA](#)
- [Mold Testing or Sampling | EPA](#)
- [Dealing with Debris and Damaged Buildings | EPA](#)
- [Flooded Homes Cleanup Guidance | EPA](#)



FEMA

## Apply for FEMA Assistance

Survivors in Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Cherokee, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Greenville, Greenwood, Hampton, Jasper, Kershaw, Laurens, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Richland, Saluda, Spartanburg, Union and York counties and the Catawba Indian Nation who need assistance may register for disaster assistance with FEMA. There are several ways to apply:

- Visit any Disaster Recovery Center. To find a center close to you, go online to: [fema.gov/drc](https://fema.gov/drc) or text DRC along with your Zip Code to 43362 (Ex: DRC 29169)
- Call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362. Help is available in many languages.
- Go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov).
- Download the [FEMA mobile app](#).

