

# Prevent Mold from Becoming a Secondary Disaster

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## Problems Associated with Mold

**Medical:** Mold spores are microscopic organisms that can float through the air and cause problems with allergies, asthma, infections, and other respiratory issues. Anyone can suffer from medical issues related to mold. However, infants and children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems may experience more severe reactions. People with breathing problems like asthma or who have weakened immune systems should stay away from moldy sites.

**Home:** If your home has mold, everything that has been contaminated must be cleaned properly and dried. Items that cannot be properly cleaned and dried within 24-48 hours should be removed and thrown away, including structural and personal property. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work. It is possible to have mold damage, despite no other visible damages.

## How to Remove Mold and Repair Your Home

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offer tips on cleaning mold after disasters.

### 8 Tips to Cleanup Mold

**Protect yourself.** Put on personal protective equipment (gloves, mask, goggles) to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin.

**Dry it up and air it out.** Dry your home and everything in it as quickly as possible – within 24 to 48 hours if you can. Open all doors and windows when you are working and leave as many open as you safely can when you leave.



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**Circulate.** When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture.

**Toss! Take it out!** Anything that was wet with flood water and can't be cleaned and dried out completely within 24 to 48 hours should be bagged, sealed, and taken outside. Take photos of discarded items for filing insurance claims.

**Clean mold outdoors:** cleaning moveable items should be done while outside. If you clean them indoors, mold spores could spread making your mold problem worse.

**Scrub small surfaces.** Hard surfaces with an area smaller than a door may be cleaned with water and a detergent. Remove all mold you can see and dry the area right away. Large surface areas or surfaces made of porous material should be thrown out.

**Measure the humidity:** Keep indoor humidity low. If possible, keep indoor humidity below 60 percent (ideally between 30 and 50 percent) relative humidity. Relative humidity can be measured with a moisture or humidity meter, available at many hardware stores.

**Don't cover it, remove it.** Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent mold from growing. Fix the water problem completely and clean up all the mold before you paint or caulk. Remove any damaged items such as soft or porous materials, such as carpet, fabric, and wood.

## Additional resources

[Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters | Mold | CDC](#)

[Mold Cleanup in Your Home | US EPA](#)

[Health and Safety | Hurricanes and Mold \(uconn.edu\)](#)

[IAQ at Home - Maine Indoor Air Quality Council](#)

- [Addressing mold in your home \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [Spotting mold in your home \(youtube.com\)](#)



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- [Microsoft Word - Mold and Indoor Air Quality BP - Board Revised Draft 04-12-11 \(maineindoorair.org\)](#)
- [Mold - Maine Indoor Air Quality Council](#)

[Guía del propietario y arrendatario para la limpieza de moho \(hongos\) después de desastres | Mold | CDC](#)

- [What to Wear Español](#)
- [8 Tips to Clean up Mold Español](#)
- [When to use bleach](#)

**Eligible survivors who need assistance may register for disaster assistance with FEMA. There are several ways to apply:**

- Visit a Disaster Recovery Center. To find a center close to you, go online to: [DRC Locator](#), or text DRC along with your Zip Code to 43362 (Ex: DRC 04074)
- Call the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362**. Help is available in most languages. The Helpline is available daily from **7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET**.
- Go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](#) (also in Spanish).
- Download the FEMA [mobile app](#) (also in Spanish), available at Google Play or the Apple App Store.

