

SEWANEE

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

Mold Management Plan

Program Description

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for responding to mold-related concerns in University facilities.

Mold Basics (EPA Site)

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), mold is a part of the natural environment that aids in the decomposition of leaves, trees, and other natural organic materials. Mold spores are invisible to the human eye and are continually floating around in nature. However, when those spores make their way indoors and are exposed to moisture, they can begin to grow. It is impossible to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment due to the ingress and egress of daily human activity. Mold is found almost everywhere and can grow on wood, paper, carpet, food, insulation, ceiling tiles, clothing, and painted walls as long as moisture and oxygen are present. Because mold needs moisture to grow, maintaining indoor moisture and humidity levels between 30-60% will reduce the likelihood of mold growth indoors. Molds produce allergens and irritants that may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes, and skin rashes. If students are having symptoms believed to be the result of allergens, they should make an appointment with University Health Services for an examination. Employees should consult their healthcare professional.

Mold Sampling

Per the EPA, “in most cases, if visible mold growth is present, sampling is unnecessary.” It is important to recognize that there are currently no EPA, OSHA, or other federal standards regarding mold. Therefore, sampling cannot be used as a method of compliance.

Generally, mold sampling is conducted to determine the scope of contamination, the type of spores present and for clearance or post-remediation testing. The University’s Office of Environmental Health and Safety can conduct mold sampling, send the samples for lab analysis, and provide an interpretation of the report.

Environmental Health and Safety may conduct sampling in the following situations:

- At the recommendation of a mold inspector or licensed remediation contractor.

- When mold growth is confirmed in a building, air samples may be taken in other sections to determine mold spore concentrations, provided those areas have a relative humidity level of 70% or higher.
- After remediation efforts are complete.

The University does not recognize the validity of results from personally purchased settling plate or “do it yourself” mold sampling kits. These methods are non-volumetric, non-quantifiable, and not relative to airborne concentrations. This method of sample collection does not follow the analytical methods recommended by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHI) or other professional organizations.

Mold Remediation

If mold is present, the required cleaning or remediation will either be performed in-house by Facilities Management staff or by a third-party contractor. If the affected area requires complex remediation outside of the capabilities of Facilities Management, an outside remediation contractor will be used.

Response and Communication

- **How to Report Mold**
All reports of suspected mold should be submitted to the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) using this form. Only reports made using this form will be investigated.
- **Receipt of Reports of Mold Concerns**
Environmental Health and Safety will triage these concerns and coordinate with the appropriate departments to determine next steps.
- **On-Site Investigation**
On-site investigations will be coordinated with the appropriate offices depending on the information available at the time of reporting and at the request of (EHS). This will be done the same day the report is received or as soon as possible.

The inspection team will consist of an EHS representative and a representative from Residential Life representative or Facilities Management. The inspection will consist of a review of the indoor area, investigation of the potential presence and source of the mold, and documentation of the extent of the problem with photos as necessary.

EHS, with input from Residential Life and Facilities Management, will determine the

next steps. EHS will provide to Facilities Management the specific steps needed to remediate the mold. Facilities Management will manage the remediation.

- Communications
 - Environmental Health and Safety will provide an investigation summary to include action plans to Residential Life, Facilities Management, or the University building authority.
 - Residential Life, Facilities Management, or the University building authority will communicate with the affected building occupants.

- Project Management
 - If Facilities Management performs remediation, Facilities Management staff will document actions taken and by whom through the Facilities Management work order system by completing or creating a work order as required.
 - Any remediation conducted by outside contractors will be managed by Facilities Management in consultation with Environmental Health and Safety.

Responsibilities

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS):

- Receives and reviews reports of mold submitted through the LINK.
- Conducts walk-through investigations of areas suspected of mold.
- Obtains access through Residential Life, Facilities Management, or Rental Housing to areas with suspected growth.
- If mold is confirmed, EHS provides Facilities Management with an action plan to address the mold growth.
- Assists Facilities Management in identifying the underlying causes of water intrusion and mold growth and develops the appropriate response(s) to prevent water intrusion recurrence.
- Communicates to Residential Life, Rental Housing, Facilities Management, and/or building administration any concerns related to the building's occupants.

Facilities Management:

- Conducts preventative building maintenance.
- Provides EHS with access to areas with suspected mold for an investigation.
- Corrects the source of moisture or water intrusion.
- Manages outside remediation contractors or performs the remediation steps outlined by EHS.
- Documents any maintenance actions performed.

Residential Life:

- Provides EHS with access to areas with suspected mold in student housing for an investigation.
- Communicate with students as required. Communication will include informing of inspection, inspection findings, and when necessary, the steps to resolve the issue.
- If student relocation is necessary:
 - provides the student with alternative housing until the issue is resolved, and
 - provides Facilities Management with access to the affected area for any maintenance.

Rental Housing:

- Provides EHS with access to areas with suspected mold in rental housing for an investigation.
- Communicates with tenants as required. Communication will include informing of inspection, inspection findings, and when necessary, the steps to resolve the issue.
- If tenant relocation is necessary:
 - provides the tenant with alternative housing until the issue is resolved, and
 - provides Facilities Management with access to the affected area for any maintenance.