



ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

HOME GUARD
ENVIRONMENTAL

Volume 23, # 1

Preventing Mold Infiltration in Residential Properties (Controlling Biologically Derived Contaminates)

INTRODUCTION:

During recent years, increasing attention has been given to the horrors of mold and fungus. Mistakenly, this common terminology really addresses a broader issue of biologically derived contaminants which takes in a greater area of concern than just mold and fungus, but also includes viruses, bacteria, endotoxins, and mycotoxins.

CONTROLLING WATER/MOISTURE IS A MUST!

Controlling water infusion is the single most important element in effectively preventing or controlling mold-causing moisture.

Correcting leaking gutters and roofs, discharge of water from leaders at the foundation, windows, walls, drains, foundation leaks, sweating or leaking pipes, poor grading around the house or any other source of



Having properly installed and clean gutters is an important element to controlling water

unplanned water --- that is the single best mold prevention process.

There are many areas, both inside and outside the home that can be potential trouble spots for mold-developing moisture.

Adherence to a vigilant program of periodic inspection of these areas can be a major deterrent to the development of mold, and is also just a good housekeeping practice.

IDENTIFYING, ISOLATING AND CONTROLLING SOURCES OF MOISTURE.

In many homes, the source of moisture can be somewhat easily identified, isolated, and controlled. However, in others, larger areas or in fact the entire building can promote mold growth. Seasonal conditions, such as heavy rains, prolonged hot or cold periods, and floods can allow heat and moisture to get trapped, and the entire building can become an incubator.

Regular inspection of areas known to be damp or wet, and immediate removal of the moisture through absorbent materials

and de-humidifiers is an essential part of a good preventive maintenance program.

Check pipes for leaks. Pay attention to walls, especially in the kitchen and bathrooms. Soft spots in the wallboard, bubbling or peeling paint in any areas or loose or spongy tiles around the bathtub or shower are generally good indications of water/moisture damage, and should be investigated to ascertain if a mold problem has developed.

Immediate removal of moldy spots on walls, floorboards and other surfaces is essential.

Regular carpet cleaning is another effective means of helping to prevent mold growth, but extra care must be exercised if using water extraction (steam) methods, to quickly dry out the carpet. Water extraction or any wet shampooing should not be done during periods of high humidity, unless the house is adequately air-conditioned.



The Basement Requires Special Attention !

In coastal areas and areas of prolonged high humidity, the use of air conditioners in the living quarters and de-humidifiers in the basement becomes essential.



Additionally, a basement area prone to flooding would require a good sump pump and/or professional waterproofing.

As long as we're on the subject of basements, it is important to pay attention to what you store in your basement, and the manner in which it is stored.

Invest in shelving, so that items may be kept off the floor as much as possible.

On the left is a water storage tank that evidences mold growth. Additionally, in very humid conditions, large amounts of water can drip off the outer walls of the tank and become a source of moisture for mold growth in other areas of the basement.



A good humidifier, elevated with an automatic discharge can make a dramatic difference in keeping a basement dry.

If you must have items on the floor, avoid having them in cardboard boxes. These are more susceptible to dampness and mildew.

Also, try to prevent items from coming in contact with potentially damp walls.

Don't Neglect the Out-of-Doors

On the outside of the home, keeping roof gutters clean and in good repair is essential.

Gutters should be professionally installed and should slope properly to insure a smooth flow of water.

Improperly installed gutters could allow water to collect and leak through the eaves into attic or walls.

Also, make sure that the ground slopes away from the building foundation, so that water does not enter or collect around the foundation.

Shade is great, but if a house is always "dark" consider cutting back trees to allow for penetration of light, which will help dry things out.

Indications of excess exterior moisture can be noticeable staining on siding, or masonry work, walkways, gutters, garage doors, driveways, or the growth of moss in the yards, on the roof, or on walkways.



The left photo shows a properly installed leader and gutter system. The gutter is a "leaf proof" design, and downspout from the upper roof is piped directly into the lower roof's gutter.

The upper right photo shows a downspout discharging directly into a pipe, directing water away from the house, either to a dry well or other lower lying



OTHER STEPS IN A GOOD “PREVENTATIVE DEFENSE”

Vent your clothes dryers to the outside where possible, rather than the basement or attic. By venting within the confines of the house, large amounts of unwanted moisture are being “dumped” into the structure. – Not a good idea.

If you don’t have one, or it is ineffective, invest in a bathroom exhaust fan that vents to the outside, and run it during showering and bathing.

If necessary, if there is no exhaust fan in the bathroom, keep a door partially ajar while showering to allow the moisture to escape. Towel dry the inside of the shower to reduce the amount of standing water.

A kitchen exhaust fan that vents to the outside, taking moisture and steam out of the house is also an excel-

lent investment, as well as helping to eliminate cooking odors

In inclement weather, avoid walking through the house with wet shoes or boots.

Good doormats will certainly help; removing wet shoes upon entering and leaving them to dry in a mudroom, or at least on a mat or towel placed in the entrance way for that purpose is definitely recommended.

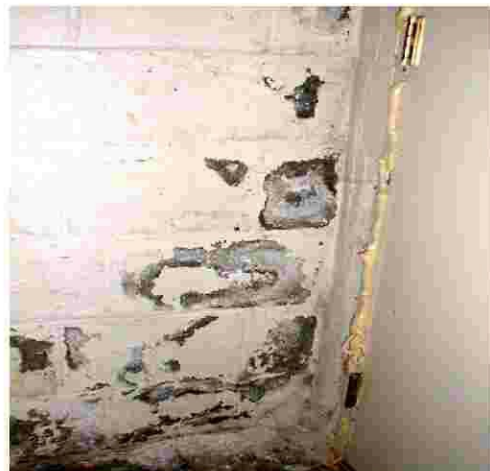
Wet spots on floors should be mopped up as quickly as possible. Don’t let them soak into flooring or walls.

Keep indoor humidity low. If possible keep it between 30 and 50 percent relative humidity. (Relative humidity can be measured with a small, inexpensive instrument, available for \$10-50 at many hardware and home goods stores). Carpeting should not be installed in areas where there is

a perpetual moisture problem, such as around sinks, toilets, drinking fountains, or on concrete floors with leaks or frequent condensation, or in basements, which have historically been damp.

In fact, remove carpeting from areas outlined above if it is present.

When preparing to purchase a home, engage the services of a qualified Home Inspector, who will amongst other things, assess the property’s current moisture issues, as well as assess the potential for future problems.



The deterioration of the paint and masonry surface, are certain indications that there is moisture/water problem around the foundation of the house.



LABORATORIES THAT CONDUCT BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINATION TESTING AND ASSESSMENTS

Hygenix , Inc.

49 Woodside Street
Stamford, CT 06902

(203) 324-2222
(203) 324-9857 (Fax)

Contact:
Robert Brown

Environmental Assessments & Solutions

41 Boulder Ridge Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583

(914) 478-1717
(914) 693-5059 (Fax)

Contact:
Charles Schwartz

Brooks Laboratories

9 Isaac Street
Norwalk, CT 06850

(203) 853-9792
(203) 853-0273 (Fax)

Contact:
Michael Zubarev



HOMEGUARD

ENVIROTECH
48 Union Street
Stamford, CT 06906

HOMEGUARD ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC.
A Division of
ENVIROTECH Environmental Services, Inc.

**48 Union Street
Stamford, CT 06906**

**Telephone: 203-323-8000
203-353-1076
203-255-9935
Fax: 203-327-0005**

**Gary H. Stone, General Manager
Jerry Martinez, Director of Field Services
Kurt A. Zimble, Office Manager**

**e-mail: info@environmental.net
www.environmental.net**

- ASBESTOS ABATEMENT
- LEAD ABATEMENT
- INSULATION SERVICES
- LEAD RISK ASSESSMENT & CONSULTING
- LEAD PROJECT PLANNING
- OIL TANK SERVICES
- DECONTAMINATION OF BIOLOGICALLY DERIVED CONTAMINATES

TO:



ABOUT ENVIROTECH...

Our Company has been specializing in Residential and Small Commercial abatement since 1985. Serving parts of Connecticut and New York, **HOMEGUARD** provides a variety of Environmental Services for Homeowners, Condominiums, Cooperatives, Apartment Buildings, General Contractors, Architects, Engineers, Fuel Oil Companies, Banks, Insurance Companies, and others involved with Real Estate or Real Estate based services.

The Company has completed over 3,000 projects some of which include the **Sears Mansion**, and **Ralph Loren's Estate**, the current or former homes of: **Ivan Lendl**, **George C. Scott**, **J. Stillman Rockefeller**, **Sam Champion**, **Marcia Kramer**, **Chuck Scarborough**, **Michelle Marsh**, **Pat Reilly**, **Pete Gogolak**, and **Malcolm Pray**, **The Wilton Historical Society**, **The Bolivar** on the Upper West Side of Manhattan on Central Park West, **Surprise Lake Camp** in Cold Springs, NY. Additional projects include: **Cablevision**

of CT, **Silver Hill Hospital** in New Canaan, **Country Club of Darien**, **Stamford Hospital** and **St. Joseph's Medical Center**, **Mobil Oil**, **Canyon Ranch** in the Berkshires, and **United Artists Theaters**, **King & Low Heywood Thomas School**, **Temple Sinai** - Stamford; **United Methodist** and **First Congregational Churches** - New Canaan; **St. Peter's Church** - Norwalk, the **Second Congregational Church** and **Greenwich Synagogue** - Greenwich; and the **Perrott Memorial Library**, **Old Greenwich**; **Stamford Center for the Performing Arts Palace Theatre**, and **Crown Theatres**.

HOMEGUARD follows all applicable EPA, OSHA, CT Department of Health Services, and NY State Department of Labor regulations, as applicable. All of the company's environmental technicians and supervisors are fully trained as required. The Company carries Worker's Compensation Insurance, General Liability Insurance, as well as Asbestos and Lead Liability Insurance.

Our company has been complimented often by our clients, not only for the high quality of work which we performed, but also for the very courteous and sensitive manner in which we work with our clients to accommodate any of their special needs and/or concerns.

Numerous Real Estate Brokers and Agents, Property and Facility Managers, as well as General, Boiler, Roofing, Plumbing, and HVAC Contractors, and Fuel Oil Companies have chosen to work with **HOMEGUARD** on a repeat basis. These organizations have recognized our dedication to our clients, along with the unsurpassed service, which we provide.

We are certain that you, and anyone associated with the project, will be very pleased with our company, its employees, and the manner in which we complete the project. We hope that you'll select **HOMEGUARD** as your Environmental Contractor.