

MOLD PREVENTION – A WOFFORD PARTNERSHIP

Preventing or reducing the incidence of mold in residence hall rooms at Wofford College calls for a partnership involving staff in the Department of Facilities, the Office of Residence Life, the Wellness Center and all occupants of the residence halls.

ABOUT MOLD

Mold, how it grows and what it takes to prevent its growth, has been well defined. There are several factors that are conducive to mold growth and, conversely, several factors that will discourage/prevent mold growth.

Hundreds of thousands of kinds of mold exist, but only a few are injurious to human health. While there are differences between molds, in general, the factors described here to discourage mold growth apply to all molds.

- Molds must have **something to feed on**. Items such as wood, clothing, drywall and carpet are ripe for mold to feed, especially if these items are dirty or damp. Items made of metal or glass usually do not promote mold unless they become dirty or greasy.
- Mold must have **moisture**. This can be in the form of humidity that's too high (above 60%) or a water leak (from the roof, around a window, plumbing, shower, etc.). It can be from condensation; air conditioners take moisture out of the air and discharge through a condensate drain. If the drain plugs up and then runs over onto carpet, this can be a problem. If any material (including wet clothes) remains moist for 24 to 48 hours, mold will begin to grow.
- Mold likes **warm temperatures**. While some types of mold can grow at temperatures as low as mid-30s, the warmer the temperature (70 and above), the better it is for mold growth.
- Mold also likes **dark, enclosed places**, with little to **no air circulation**. Air circulation generally is good, perhaps being moved through an air filter, with interior doors open to get good circulation. Where possible, let sunlight in; mold does not like sunlight.

MOLD CAN BE A SERIOUS HEALTH CONCERN

Small amounts of mold usually will not cause significant health problems in healthy young people, although many people will experience minor allergy symptoms when exposed to small amounts of mold. Greater amounts of mold generally lead to more serious health problems, but even small amounts of mold can trigger asthma attacks and other health problems in people with pre-existing conditions that make them more susceptible to mold-related health issues.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, mold-related health problems can include:

- Sneezing.
- Coughing.
- Runny nose.
- Sore throat.

- Headaches.
- Itchy, irritated eyes.
- Asthma attacks.
- Skin rashes.
- Respiratory infections.

OUR WOFFORD PARTNERSHIP: HOW TO PREVENT MOLD

The campus-wide partnership to control mold in residence halls means each area has its responsibilities.

- Facilities staff maintains all HVAC equipment so that it is at peak working condition. Staff will be responsive to all building occupants when they perceive a problem. Facilities staff will correct any conditions that develop and will assist in or take any appropriate remediation steps.
- Building occupants will notify facilities staff when a problem is noticed, particularly issues involving moisture.
- Staff in the Office of Residence Life, through the network of residence assistants and residence directors, will notify facilities staff as soon as possible after any observations, complaints or smells indicating problems that may be related to mold.
- Students should report any potential problems with residence hall rooms that may impact the health of the occupants as soon as possible to fixit.wofford.edu.
- In residence halls, the public common areas are maintained by facilities staff and private areas are maintained by student residents (bathrooms in some residence halls, sleeping cubes where present and common rooms). It is essential that building residents take notice of these tips:
 - Report any water problems (leaks behind a toilet or under sinks, dripping faucets, wet carpet, leak from a ceiling, moisture under tiles, drips heard behind the air intake cover, etc.) immediately to facilities staff by submitting a work order on fixit.wofford.edu.
 - Keep all vents in all areas open to maintain proper airflow.
 - Good housekeeping practices (vacuum floors, wipe down counters, clean up spills quickly, wash out refrigerators to include wiping the doors, etc.) should be shared by all roommates to help reduce the amount of food sources for mold growth.
 - Windows should not be opened; open windows will let in unconditioned air (warm, moist, spore-laden air).
 - Neither the inflow to nor outflow from the fan coil units should be blocked (partially or fully).
 - Wet or dirty clothes should not be left on the floor.
 - Cubical doors should be left open for good air circulation.
 - Private bathrooms should be cleaned daily.
 - Private rooms should be vacuumed and dusted routinely.
 - Remember that HVAC systems not only maintain comfortable temperatures, but also reduce humidity levels. Anything that interferes with the optimal

operation of the units (such as opening windows or blocking air flow) can cause conditions conducive to mold growth.

If all of the above is done, we will be able to prevent mold from starting or be able to correct any situation before it becomes serious.

SPECIFIC RESIDENCE HALLS

Occupants of these specific residence halls should make note of these details:

Marsh (common restrooms):

- 2 pipe system.
- Conditioned fresh air supplied to hallways.
- Fan coils located on floor. ***Do not place objects directly in front of them.***
- Room conditions controlled by fan speed switch. ***It is important to not turn fans to the OFF position.***

Carlisle (private restrooms):

- 2 pipe system.
- Fresh air supplied is not conditioned.
- Fan coils located on floor in cube. ***Given their location, it is easy to place furniture in front of these; be sure to maintain a clear pathway for air movement.***
- ***Leave cube doors open when unoccupied and whenever possible to promote airflow into common space.***

Greene (common restrooms):

- 4 pipe system.
- Conditioned fresh air supplied to hallways and rooms.
- Thermostat range of 68F-75F controlled by facilities staff.

Shipp / DuPre (common restrooms):

- 4 pipe system.
- Conditioned fresh air supplied to hallways and rooms.
- Fixed windows.
- Thermostat range of 68F-75F controlled by facilities staff.

Wightman (private restrooms):

- 2 pipe system.
- Conditioned fresh air supplied to common areas in rooms.
- Thermostat range of 68F-75F controlled facilities staff.
- ***Leave cube doors open when unoccupied and whenever possible to promote airflow into common space.***
- Room conditions controlled by fan speed switch.

Lesesne (private restrooms):

- 4 pipe system.
- Conditioned fresh air supplied to common areas in rooms.
- Thermostat range of 68F-75F controlled by facilities staff.

Michael S. Brown Village Center (private restrooms):

- Residential-style HVAC unit.
- Thermostat range of 68F-75F controlled by facilities staff.
- Fresh air supplied is not conditioned.

Village Phase 1-4 (private restrooms):

- Residential-style HVAC unit.
- Facilities staff is unable to control thermostat range. ***Student residents should maintain a range between 68F-75F. Setting thermostats to either extreme does not accomplish quicker cooling or heating of the space and will cause the system to freeze and not work.***
- ***Under no circumstance should the thermostat fan be set to ON. Fan should remain on AUTO. Setting the fan to ON will bring moisture into the living space.***
- ***Students in apartments with floor registers must make every effort to prevent dirt/trash/or fluids from entering registers. If items are dropped or spilled into the registers, facilities staff should be notified as soon as possible.***