

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND



MOLD PREVENTION &
PROTOCOL

FOR BUILDING OCCUPANTS

Effective Date: December 2024

www.uri.edu/EHS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The University of Rhode Island (URI) is committed to protecting the health and safety of all students, faculty, staff, visitors, and volunteers.

Mold contamination in the indoor environment is a complex issue. There is scientific uncertainty regarding health effects associated with exposure to mold, however the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Institute of Medicine, the World Health Organization (WHO), and Health Canada all agree that living and working in a building or space impacted by mold results in increased respiratory concerns, including allergic reactions.

This Mold Remediation and Prevention Protocol (“Protocol”) presents useful guidelines that can be employed by students, faculty, and staff to help identify mold, and conditions that can lead to mold growth.

Mold can be found anywhere moisture and oxygen are present. Mold can grow on virtually any organic substance, including wood, paper, cardboard, dust, and insulation. When excessive moisture accumulates in buildings or building materials, mold growth will often occur, particularly if the environment contributing to mold growth remains undiscovered or is left unaddressed.

It is impossible to eliminate all mold and mold spores in an indoor environment. Indoor mold growth, however, can be controlled by controlling indoor moisture. Since mold requires moisture to grow, it is important to prevent excess humidity in buildings.

Various factors can contribute to moisture concerns in building interiors. Changes in building construction practices during the 1970s, 80s and 90s resulted in buildings that are tightly sealed and/or lack adequate ventilation. Not infrequently, older buildings were designed to pull in untreated air from the outside, thereby introducing excessive indoor humidity that is difficult to control. Here at URI, our water table is close to the surface, a factor that can promote excessive moisture buildup during warmer months, and when outside relative humidity adds to moisture control challenges.

When indoor humidity can't be properly controlled, it may become trapped in building materials, including drywall, ceilings, books and paper, clothing, and carpet and ceiling tiles; this excessive moisture can lead to mold growth. Interior moisture challenges are aggravated not only by deficient building design but by deferred maintenance. Leaking roofs, gutters, downspouts, doors and thresholds, and landscaping that serves to direct water into or under buildings, can easily aggravate or cause humidity concerns in building interiors.

Foresight, vigilance, and best-practices methodologies can help prevent mold. URI is committed to ensuring that each member of the University community is made aware of common factors that contribute to mold growth; ways and means to control and prevent mold growth; and time-tested procedures to remediate mold, safely and effectively, whenever and wherever it is discovered.

A. Objective

The objective of this Protocol is to utilize prevention techniques to minimize the potential for mold and fungal growth; identify, control, and remediate areas containing mold and fungal growth; and protect the safety and health of all University students, employees, and visitors. This Protocol shall be used in conjunction with URI's Mold Prevention & Remediation Protocol for Supporting Services, URI's Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”), and Hazard Communication Programs.

B. Applicability

This Protocol applies to all occupants of a University of Rhode Island building on all campuses and personnel supervisors for employee occupants.

II. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
<p>Building Occupants <i>(All individuals engaged in activities in a building located on a URI campus (excluding residence halls)).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Protocol’s processes and procedures for preventing, reporting, controlling, and remediating mold and fungal growth. • Report all visible mold/fungal growth to the Facilities Operations Control Center before further action is taken.
<p>Residence Hall Occupants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Protocol’s processes and procedures for preventing, reporting, controlling, and remediating mold and fungal growth. • Report all visible mold/fungal growth to Housing and Residential Life through the URI My Housing Portal. • Occupants concerned about their health should contact their physician, Health Services, and/or the Housing and Residential Life Office.
<p>Supervisors, Managers, Classroom Instructors <i>(All individuals who oversee personnel, students, or occupants of a building located on a URI Campus)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all reports received from building occupants of visible mold/fungal growth are reported to the Facilities Operations Control Center before further action is taken. • Advise occupants concerned about their health to contact their physician, URI Health Services, or the Environmental Health & Safety Office. • Encourage occupants to support the Protocol’s processes and procedures for preventing, reporting, controlling, and remediating mold and fungal growth.
<p>Supervisors, Managers, Classroom Instructors <i>(All individuals who oversee personnel, students, or occupants of a building located on a URI Campus)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all reports received from building occupants of visible mold/fungal growth are reported to the Facilities Operations Control Center before further action is taken. • Advise occupants concerned about their health to contact their physician, URI Health Services, and/or the Environmental Health & Safety Office. • Encourage occupants to support the Protocol’s processes and procedures for preventing, reporting, controlling, and remediating mold and fungal growth.
<p>Housing & Residential Life Office Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all concerns received from occupants of visible mold/fungal growth are reported to the My Housing Portal before further action is taken.

III. MOLD PREVENTION STEPS

Preventing mold growth is key to maintaining a healthy indoor environment. Occupants are encouraged to minimize mold risks.

Control Humidity

Maintain indoor humidity levels between 30-50%. Use air conditioners or dehumidifiers during humid months. Ventilate bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry rooms.

Dry Wet Areas Quickly

Always carefully clean up spills of any kind. Do not leave wet shoes, clothing, boxes, papers, or umbrellas on the carpet, the presence of which can spur mold growth. If carpets, flooring, or walls are saturated, contact Facilities Management to ensure proper drying.

Ensure Proper Ventilation

Do not block wall heating and cooling units with items (i.e. plants, fish tanks, boxes, books, etc.) that impede airflow or items that hold moisture on top of wall heating and cooling units. Keep windows and doors open to increase air circulation.

Clean and Maintain

Remove trash and food containers from working areas as these items can provide food sources for mold. In residence spaces, regularly clean bathrooms, kitchens, and areas prone to moisture. Use mold-inhibiting cleaners in high-risk areas like bathrooms.

Avoid Overcrowding

Ensure there is sufficient space between items in a room or storage area allowing air to circulate freely. Regularly declutter and organize to maintain good airflow.

IV. REPORTING ISSUES & CONCERNS

Take steps if you identify any of the following:

- Water leaks, water intrusion, and excessive humidity in your working space or other areas. Mold can start growing within 24-48 hours of water exposure.
- Visible Mold Grown (e.g., dark spots, fuzzy patches, or musty odors).

1	Report the Issue
Provide details and any photos.	
AREA OF CONCERN	REPORT TO
Campus Buildings <i>(i.e. all administrative, academic, research, farm or athletic buildings at Kingston Campus, Narragansett Bay Campus, or Alton Jones)</i>	Facilities Operations Control Center Submit: Work Request Form Call: 401.874.4060 Email: mcc@etal.uri.edu .
Residence halls <i>(all campus housing)</i>	Housing and Residential Life Office My Housing Portal Call: 401.874.4151 Email: housing@uri.edu

2

Do Not Disturb

Do not try to clean or remove mold yourself, especially if it covers a large area (more than 10 square feet).

3

Restrict Access

If possible, avoid using the affected space until Facilities Management has assessed the area and provided further guidance.

4

Follow Safety Instructions

If instructed by Facilities Management or Environmental Health & Safety, follow any steps such as relocating or restricting access until the issue is resolved.

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V. HEALTH EFFECTS

Certain individuals may experience health effects from mold exposure, especially those with asthma, allergies, or weakened immune systems. Symptoms may include nasal congestion, eye irritation, coughing, or skin rashes.

If you believe you are experiencing symptoms related to mold exposure, follow these steps:

- **Monitor Symptoms:** Take note of your symptoms, when they began, and whether they improve when you leave the building.
- **Seek Medical Attention:** Contact your healthcare provider if symptoms persist or worsen. Be sure to mention any potential mold exposure.
- **Notify University Health Services:** Report any health concerns potentially related to mold exposure to University Health Services.
- **Inform Your Supervisor:** Employees should inform their supervisors if symptoms are affecting their ability to work.
- **Limit Exposure:** If possible, avoid the affected area until it has been properly assessed and remediated by Facilities Operations.

VI. CONTACT LIST

Facilities Operations Control Center	401-874-4060	401-874-2480
Environmental Health and Safety	401-874-7993	401-874-5500
Custodial Services	401-874-2868	
Housing and Residence Life	401-874-4151	
Health Services	401-874-2246	
URI Non-Emergency (Public Safety Dispatch)	401-874-4910	
Dining Services	401-874-2055	
Facilities Operations - Narragansett Bay Campus	401-874-6584	
Memorial Union	401-874-2056	

VII. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following are additional resources for guidance and information.

- American Industrial Hygiene Association (aiha.org): [Facts About Mold A Consumer Focus Fact Sheet](#) (July 8, 2020)
- Rhode Island Department of Health (health.ri.gov): [Some Facts About Mold RI DOH](#)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (epa.gov): [Mold in Schools and Commercial Buildings](#) (June 16, 2024)

VIII. PROTOCOL REVISIONS

Version #	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Changes to Protocol
0001	September 2023	n/a	n/a
0002	December 2024	Separation of protocols applicable to occupants into new Protocol for Building Occupants document, greater clarification on building occupant responsibilities for prevention and reporting, supervisor responsibilities for reporting, clarification on where to report, informational resources for occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed sections applicable to supporting services. • Added sections II & IV.