

What is Mould and Mildew?

They are types of fungi that thrive in moist environments.

- **Mildew** is mould in its early stage and is typically white or grey and has a downy or powdery texture.
- **Mould** can be orange, green, black, brown, pink or purple with a fuzzy or slimy texture.

Where Can You Find It?

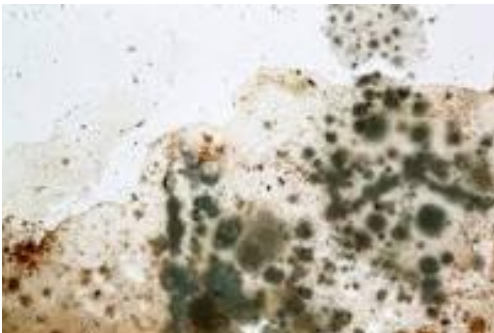
Mould spores are always present outdoors and often find a way indoors. Mould growths or colonies can begin to grow on damp surfaces, including wood products, ceiling tiles, cardboard, wallpaper, carpets, drywall, fabric, plants, foods, insulation, decaying leaves and other organic materials within 24 to 48 hours of exposure to water.

Be aware of trapped moisture in walls, floors and other surfaces in unventilated and unheated areas.

Mould on Construction Sites

The growth of mould on construction sites is common. Sites are prone to moisture and uncontrolled humidity, which is the perfect environment for mould to grow. Airborne mould spores, which can number in the billions per square metre, may pose a health risk when inhaled, especially by those with weakened immune systems, pregnant women and individuals with respiratory conditions. Some symptoms of mould inhalation include:

- Respiratory problems - wheezing, asthma attacks, etc.
- Nasal and sinus congestion or a dry, hacking cough
- Skin irritations such as rashes or hives
- Nervous system - headaches, memory loss
- Aches and pains



OHS Guidelines

Aside from the health and financial impacts that the growth of mould can have on a construction project, it is also important to consider the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) implications of mould growth. As per OHS guidelines, consider the following safety practices and procedures when dealing with potential or existing mould growth, to avoid adverse health effects:

- If mould is found, work in that area is to be stopped. The worker is to report the mould to the supervisor immediately.
- Mould must not be disturbed because it may become airborne and contaminate other areas.
- Wet construction material must not be installed unless part of an approved process.
- Mouldy construction materials must not be installed.
- Workers must report wet or mouldy construction materials immediately so proper corrective measures like drying, cleaning or replacement can be implemented.
- Where water is introduced as part of a construction process, every reasonable effort should be made to dry out wet materials within 24 hours (48 hrs maximum).

Best Practices

- Protect stored materials from moisture.
- Minimize moisture accumulation within the building.
- Maintain the integrity of the building envelope components through monitoring and inspections.
- Monitor installations to ensure they remain clean and dry (including HVAC systems).
- Create a written project environment and safety plan that identifies mould prevention practices and procedures.
- Provide incident report forms for documenting water intrusion incidents.
- Conduct safety meetings where topics of water intrusion, such as rain, snow and spills, can be communicated and documented.

More information about the health risks, signs and prevention of mould can be found at [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)