

HAZARD RECOGNITION AND IDENTIFICATION

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 in colour 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 a damp surface, 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 are common as they are prone to moisture and uncontrolled humidity—the perfect environment for mould to grow. When airborne, the billions of spores per square metre produced by mould growth may pose a potential health risk when inhaled by those with compromised immune systems, pregnant women, and individuals who have existing respiratory conditions. Some symptoms of mould inhalation include:

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

For more information, visit the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) website.

WORKER ORIENTATION

OHS guidelines

Aside from the health and financial impacts 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 its adverse health effects:

- ⇒ If mould is found, work in that area is to be stopped and 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 hrs (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 which 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.

Tool Box Talk

How To Use This Resource

When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks. Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.



For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

ABOUT THE SASKATCHEWAN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY ASSOCIATION

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.