

CBS Corporate Safety and Environmental Affairs

CBS Corporation, 20 Stanwix Street,
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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Assessing and Addressing Indoor Air Quality at Your Site

At the October 2017 EHS Council Meeting, Dr. Coreen Robbins presented extensive information on molds, including their life cycle, health effects and exposure routes.

Molds are fungi that mainly reproduce by creating tiny spores. Spores are found throughout indoor and outdoor air and on all surfaces. They grow virtually anywhere, as long as moisture or water and an organic food source are present. Recognizing that mold spores are naturally present everywhere at all times, the key to preventing mold growth and amplification is controlling moisture primarily by mitigating water intrusion.

When mold spores land on a damp spot which is also a food source, they can begin growing and become visible. They can grow on wood, paper, carpet, foods, painted surfaces, wallboard, and many other surfaces. With sufficient moisture, mold growth often will occur, particularly if the moisture source remains uncorrected. Dr. Robbins advises that water intrusion should be addressed promptly because mold spores can germinate in 24-48 hours depending on mold type and the ambient temperature.

Drawing from her expertise as well as recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Dr. Robbins explained that there is no such thing as “Toxic Mold”. This is a myth which generates unnecessary anxiety among employees and, often times, prompts unnecessary and expensive corrective actions. Molds generally do not cause systemic infections or significant health effects. Most people have no reaction when exposed to molds. An allergic reaction, similar to pollen or animal allergies, is the most common health effect for those individuals sensitive to molds. This may manifest as fever-type symptoms such as a runny nose and red eyes. Exposure may also aggravate asthma.

Air sampling to evaluate or identify mold is not advised by OSHA, the EPA, the CDC or other recognized authorities. Air sampling is meaningless because there are no applicable federal or state standards for airborne concentrations of mold or mold spores. Simply put, the amount of mold spores in the air is not predictive of health effects.

We suggest taking the following steps if you identify visible mold:

- Consult with Corporate EHS
- Find and eliminate the source of water intrusion as quickly as possible;
- Remove the mold, dry water-damaged areas and remove contaminated materials in accordance with the Corporate EHS Guidelines:
 - ✓ Wear personal protective equipment as described in the EHS Indoor Air Quality Guidelines.
 - ✓ Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely.
 - ✓ Absorbent or porous materials, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, may have to be thrown away if they become moldy. Mold can grow on or fill in the empty spaces and crevices of porous materials, so the mold may be difficult or impossible to remove completely.
 - ✓ Document the steps taken.

We have developed a set of guidelines to assist in addressing a broad array of indoor air quality issues including mold. Please email Katy Rullo, Kathleen.rullo@cbs.com for a copy of the guidelines.

EHS Council Meeting

This year’s Council Meeting was held on October 17th and 18th in New York.

On Tuesday, we focused on topics that broadly applied to all CBS locations. Dr. Robbins presented us with information about mold and what to do if we encounter it. We also heard from Scott Hinesley of REI Engineers, who discussed how to keep water out of our facilities and prolong the life of a roofing system. Jeremy Longo of Belfor explained how Belfor has assisted clients in dealing with recent national disasters.

On Wednesday, we focused on inspection compliance and elevated work fall protection. Terry Freund of Brady Corporation explained in detail implementation of Brady’s InspectNTrack inspection management system and David Templeman spoke on OSHA’s new Walking and Working Surfaces requirements.