Mold, Mildew and Other Unhealthy Fungi

Molds and mildew are fungi that grow on the surfaces of objects, within pores, and in deteriorated materials. They can cause discoloration and odor problems, deteriorate building materials, and lead to allergic reactions in susceptible individuals, as well as other health problems.

The following conditions are necessary for mold growth to occur on surfaces:

- temperature range above 40° F and below 100° F
- mold spores *
- nutrient base (most surfaces contain nutrients)
- moisture (water or high humidity)

Human comfort constraints limit the use of temperature control. Spores are almost always present in outdoor and indoor air. Almost all commonly used construction materials and furnishings can provide nutrients to support mold growth. MOISTURE CONTROL IS THUS AN IMPORTANT STRATEGY FOR REDUCING MOLD GROWTH.

Carpeting should never be used in areas (such as on-grade concrete floors) where persistent moisture is present.

Any porous material in a building that has been microbially contaminated should be discarded; disinfection is rarely effective. Contaminated insulation, ceiling tiles and rugs must be removed.

Smooth surface materials that have become contaminated can be cleaned with a biocide. Contact Physical Plant Custodial Services and request cleaning for your area.

If you are experiencing a mold/mildew problem the moisture source must be controlled or abated. Physical Plant should be contacted and a work order submitted.

Sources:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. December 1991. *Building Air Quality: A Guide for Building Owners and Facility Managers*. pp. 229
- American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. 1989. *Guidelines for the Assessment of Bioaerosols in the Indoor Environment*.