

STATE OF NEBRASKA

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

CONTACTS: Jodie Fawl, NEMA, 402-471-7428

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mike Wight, DHHS, 402-471-3486

April 23, 2019

Be Aware of Mold in Homes that Need Repair After Flooding

Lincoln – Water and time means mold isn't far behind.

According to experts at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control mold in homes and buildings with flood waters in them need to be handled carefully. You may need to call in a professional depending on the extent of damage and your personal capabilities.

Safety First

“The first thing a home or business owner must consider is safety,” says Doug Gillespie, with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. “Re-entering your home after a flood can be quite dangerous. Then, if you can enter your home and there is mold present, it can affect your health.”

Exposure to damp and moldy environments may cause a variety of health effects. Some people are sensitive to molds. For these people, molds can cause nasal stuffiness, throat irritation, coughing or wheezing, eye irritation, or, in some cases, skin irritation. People with mold allergies may have more severe reactions. Immune-compromised people and people with chronic lung illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may get serious infections in their lungs when they are exposed to mold. These people should stay away from areas that are likely to have mold.

Solve your mold problem

Your next step will be to figure out if you can do the mold cleanup or if you will need a professional. For many Nebraskans, the current flooding will create a problem that is simply too big to handle without professional assistance.

If you were not able to dry your home (including furniture and other items) within 24-48 hours, you should assume you have mold growth. You need to *completely* dry everything, clean up the mold, and make sure you don't still have a moisture problem.

Mold can appear on newly replaced-drywall if wood studs were not completely dry before installation.

Before you start cleanup activities, contact your insurance company and take pictures of the home and your belongings. Remember – drying your home and removing water-damaged items is your most important step for preventing mold damage.

Mold due to floods can be extensive and may require a mold remediation professional to tackle the job. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that trained mold remediation professionals do the mold cleanup if mold growth covers as little as a 10 foot by 10 foot area.

The amount of work you can do for yourself will depend on your capabilities and you may need help with an even smaller area.

Just be sure to take safety precautions when working around mold.

Finding a mold remediation professional can be done by searching for 'hiring a mold remediation professional'.

Sources of Information:

DHHS <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Documents/moldaffect.pdf>

CDC https://www.cdc.gov/mold/dampness_facts.htm

UNL Extension <http://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/g2108.pdf>

<https://flood.unl.edu/cleaning-after-flood>