

Finding the Cause of your Mold Problem

- o Determine if there was any specific leak or event that caused the damage. Plumbing and roof leaks are frequent culprits. In winter, check for ice dams and roof leaks. Remember that there can be more extensive damage than what is visible.
- o Use a moisture meter and/or camera probe to test the dampness in suspect walls or surfaces.
- o If necessary remove a small section of a wall or ceiling if you suspect a hidden problem.
- o Look for peeling paint, stains on the siding, or bulges in the walls or ceilings.

- o Check window, door, and chimney flash-ings. Look for gaps in siding.
- o Look for kitchen and bathroom vents and find out whether they are used.
- o Check out other ventilation systems. Determine if there are humidifiers in use.
- o If there are no obvious leaks or moisture sources, consider how moisture could be migrating and condensing on colder surfaces. Cathedral ceilings and walls with poor insulation and wall design are good suspects for this phenomenon.
- o Check basements or crawlspaces for dampness. Determine if there are rain gutters and spouting, and if they are clear and directed into a drainage system or away from house.
- o Assess the air flow patterns in the house.
- o Check for unvented, or blocked vents, for combustion appliances. Determine how makeup air is supplied for the heaters.
- o Check for duct leaks and uninsulated ducts, particularly in unconditioned spaces. Check the air conditioning and verify that it is properly sized.
- o If the house has an exterior insulated and finish (EIFS) wall system, check all flashings and determine if the wall system has proper drainage planes.
- o The best practice is to diagnose and solve the underlying problems, not just guess. Any moisture and mold that is not remedied can continue to cause structural and health problems for the residents.
- o Testing for mold is usually not helpful. It can be used to pinpoint problem areas or to verify that mold counts are reduced. To be verifiable, mold testing must be done by a qualified technician and assessed by a certified laboratory.