



Environmental Solutions Group

## The Need for A Mold Investigator and Remediator

How do you know if the mold or sewage conditions present in your home require the services of an expert? A respected professor of microbiology at the Harvard School of Public Health recently addressed this question in the January 2008 issue of Indoor Environment Connections. Here are the points made in the article:

- There are conditions that can be safely remediated by property owners<sup>1</sup>, however, many times the conditions require the knowledge and advice of an expert if the problem is not to return or cause further damage;
- One example of a condition where expert advice is essential is when a relatively new home begins showing signs of mold growth in or under the home. There are two problems that require expert advice: 1) the need to find out why is the mold growing and 2) did someone make a mistake that caused the condition for the mold to grow?

The answers to the questions can only be provided by a professional with experience in why water penetrates or condenses in a certain place. The professional also provides an independent opinion who can make an assessment without bias. This is one of the reasons the investigator should not be the remediator.

- Another example of when expert advice is needed is when a public building develops a problem. All too often, building management hires maintenance personnel with little or no experience in properly remediating mold and then expects them to clean it up without harming themselves or the people who use the building. If management has any sense at all, they will call in the best investigator they can find to study the problem and recommend the proper steps or protocols to a remediator.

The final analysis is that mold investigators and remediators play an important role in the quality of our indoor air. An experienced and unbiased professional is often what is needed to get the job corrected properly.

<sup>1</sup> If you choose to perform your own remediation, be sure to understand the principles of containment, negative pressurization, personal protective equipment (PPE) and the habits of biological growth. You should be able to visually identify biological growth and damage to structural materials. Also understand when and how to use HEPA vacuuming equipment, air scrubbers and anti-microbial chemicals. You may also need to own or have access to the previously mentioned equipment plus a moisture detection device, thermal imaging camera, and air monitoring equipment.

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