



When is it necessary to test Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)?

There are a number of situations that call for professional testing of IAQ. Some are obvious, such as following a known chemical spill, bio-hazard or water leak. Some situations are not as obvious, such as a leak hidden under a floor, in a wall or crawlspace. In some cases, people may mention a musty odor or complain of headaches, throat irritation, or itchy eyes – all of which are an indication that IAQ may need to be evaluated.

Is it possible to do our own testing?

While home test kits are available from home centers, they rarely provide accurate results and cannot be used in court. The EPA and CDC both advise people to contact a professional to evaluate a situation prior to testing. Not doing so could expose people to unnecessary risk. In addition, testing requires that certain parameters are met to insure accurate results.

What can we do to keep our IAQ safe?

Provide adequate ventilation, keep indoor humidity under 60%, use MERV-8 furnace filters and change them as recommended by the manufacturer, repair any water leaks immediately and dry all affected material thoroughly, and inspect your crawl space regularly for signs of moisture or visible mold.

Can we have a mold issue and not know it?

Absolutely. Many of the buildings we visit have mold growth that was not noticed by the occupants. Mold can be difficult to spot as it likes to grow in out-of-the-way places and many molds are light in color or match the color of the surface on which they are growing. In addition, there may be mold spores in the air that the eye cannot see.

Isn't it true that mold is everywhere?

Mold is a natural part of our outdoor environment and serves a valuable role in our ecosystem. Homes and businesses usually have small amounts of mold in the air – the result of mold spores entering the indoor area through windows, doorways and HVAC systems. Mold counts can become 'amplified' under ideal indoor conditions and cause many health issues when breathed or eaten on food. The EPA has stated that materials inside a home should have fungal growth removed.

Will you look for moisture issues that caused our mold problem?

We use a moisture meter on all mold inspections where moisture may still be present. We also use a sophisticated thermal imaging camera to identify hidden moisture, but note that additional fees apply for extensive thermal imaging services.

Can mold in our crawl space make us sick?

Over 60% of the air in your home filters through the crawl space, which means spores can enter your living area. Therefore, it is important to control mold in the crawl or risk contaminating your inside air with harmful spores.

Are some molds more harmful than others?

Yes. Molds are generally classified as either contaminants or pathogens. The latter are known to cause health issues in humans, especially children, elderly, and people with a compromised immune system. Pathogenic molds should be taken very seriously as they can cause illness by getting into the lungs or being eaten on food. Aspergillus, Penicillium and Stachybotrys are examples of pathogenic molds, but there are many others. These molds are more harmful when dormant or as hyphal fragments as they contain mycotoxins that are known carcinogens.

What methods are used to test for mold?

Your inspector will use an airborne particle monitor to locate areas suspected of airborne contamination. Surface and/or air samples will then be collected as recommended by the standards established by government and medical organizations. Air samples are a vital step in determining which types of molds have released spores in the air and in what amounts so appropriate protocols for remediation are developed.

Is it always necessary to test for mold?

While it is not always necessary, it is highly recommended and necessary for protocol development. In cases where the source of contamination is unclear, surface & air sampling are an important part of a building evaluation. Air sampling can also aid in detecting hidden mold in wall and ceiling cavities.

Can we do mold cleanup ourselves?

The EPA & NYC Department of Health advise that untrained individuals contact a mold removal professional.