

Moisture and Mold Control in MCAS Beaufort Family Housing Units

Is Mold in Your Home a Problem?

Mold and mildew are types of fungi. Fungi are present almost everywhere in indoor and outdoor environments. Most fungi thrive in moist environments. So the best way to prevent fungal growth is to keep excess moisture out of your home by keeping the humidity level low and removing any sources of standing water. The three ways in which you can be exposed to fungus inside your home are by inhaling tiny fungus particles that are disturbed or released into the air, touching it, or ingesting it. Health effects in humans from exposure to fungi vary depending on the type of fungus, the amount of exposure, and the susceptibility of the exposed person (i.e. history of allergies, age, current health, etc.). The most common symptoms of exposure to household mold and other fungi are allergic type reactions including runny nose, eye irritation, cough, congestion, and aggravation of asthma.

NEHC Assessment of MCAS Beaufort Family Housing Units - On September 7th and 8th, a representative from the Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) inspected five MCAS Beaufort housing units. The structures were visibly inspected for areas of noticeable water damage and/or mold growth and air samples were taken from inside and outside the units. The air sampling was conducted to determine if the fungi detected in the indoor air samples is naturally occurring, based on its presence in the outside air, or if it is from another source of mold that is growing inside the house.

The results of the NEHC inspections and sampling indicate that some of the MCAS Beaufort housing units may have a problem with excess moisture and mold growth inside the homes. In most cases, the visible mold found in homes can be traced to a standing water source or previous water damage to the structure. Common examples include water damaged carpet and walls, clogged or inadequate water condensate drain lines leading outside from the heat pump, standing water in the heat pump condensate drain pans or excess moisture inside the heat pump closet, cracked brickwork, and poor humidity control and air filtration in vacant houses. The good news is these problems are

relatively easy to fix and prevent when they are discovered early.

The best practice to prevent a problem with mold is to ensure that any and all water damage to materials in your home is completely dried within 24 to 48 hours. This means if your carpet becomes wet or saturated from an overflowing toilet or other water source, or if your heat pump closet is constantly damp and humid or has standing water in the condensate pan, or if you notice a water stain on your walls, then your home may need special attention and possibly repair. We need to make sure that everything is dry within a day or two to make sure we don't end up with a mold problem in your home. With your help we can identify and correct the conditions that may lead to a mold problem before it has a chance to happen.

How can you help? Call the housing office any time you have a water leak or overflow that wets your carpet enough that moisture may still remain after a day. This excludes any minor spills. Also call us if you notice water stains on the surface of your walls and ceilings. If the "sheet rock" material is stained by water, then there may be moisture inside your walls. You can also help us by monitoring the drainage of water and moisture from your air conditioner/heat pump unit. If the water condensate line from your unit goes outside, problems can occur if the drainage saturates the slab foundation of your home or if it is clogged and the water backs up into the heat pump closet in the form of excess moisture or standing water. Please call us immediately if you notice either type of problem with your unit. Another potential problem identified in the NEHC inspection was cracked mortar and brickwork on the outside of housing units. These problems need to be repaired as soon as possible to prevent moisture from entering the walls of your home. If you notice any large cracks running through the brickwork of your home, please contact our office.

Please don't hesitate to call our office at XXXXXXX if you notice or suspect any water damage in your home. With your help we can keep your home safe, dry, and mold-free.