

Information for Tenants Regarding Mold

(this is a good read for landlords too)

Are you a tenant who is concerned about mold in your home?

First things first. Talk to the homeowner or property manager about your concerns. Ask if they will have a professional come and assess the situation. Be clear that you would like it to be a qualified mold professional. Make sure you document all your conversations, emails and texts.

-Be aware that you – the tenant – may be contributing to the problem. High humidity in homes provides the perfect environment for mold to grow. We suggest that tenants use their bathroom and range hood fans when showering and cooking. It is also a good idea to air out your home - yes, even in winter. Open up all your windows and turn off your heat every week or so. Keep furniture and boxes a few inches away from exterior walls. Make sure all beds are up off the floor on a frame (not laying directly on the floor). Keep your closets open up a crack to allow for ventilation.

Increased ventilation reduces humidity! The less humidity in your home, the less chance of mold growth. The larger your family, the more humidity you are creating.

Aquariums contribute to humidity in the home. If you have an aquarium you should be running a good dehumidifier in your home, or at the minimum, a fan should be running in the room where the aquarium is and keep that door open.

Don't think your bathroom fan is working? Here's how you test it: Turn on your bathroom fan, hold a piece of tissue right up to it. If the tissue falls to the ground you may need the bathroom fan changed out. The tissue will stick to a bathroom fan that is pulling air adequately. Document this and report it to the homeowner or property manager.

We recommend that homeowners have an electrician install a humidistat at eye level on the wall outside of the main bathroom. This will automatically turn on the fan when the humidity in the home is high and will run until it lowers. There are also lock-boxes available to cover the humidistat so that it cannot be turned off. Homeowners should keep in mind that most tenants are more likely to run their bathroom fan often if it's a quiet one. Maybe it's time for a new high cfm/low sone bathroom fan?

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Do you see mold? Take some photos, document the date and make sure you share them with the homeowner. Are you suffering from respiratory issues and rashes? Go to your doctor and share your health concerns. Some doctors may issue a note attesting to the fact that mold may be the cause of your symptoms. Its important to note that common molds are simply allergens (not toxic) and not everyone is affected by these allergens.

Okay, so you have done all this and you are still feeling like the homeowner or property manager is still not addressing the situation to your satisfaction. We suggest going to BC Residential Tenancy Branch on line: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/residential-tenancies>

Go to Apply for Dispute Resolution On-Line. "Dispute" seems like such a strong word. Think of it more like a mediation service for tenants and landlords. Make sure you read the Try to Solve the Problem Yourself information first. Submitting an online dispute will start a process in which the Residential Tenancy Branch collects information and documentation from you – the tenant – as well as the homeowner.

At this time, if you have spent any of your own money assessing the mold, you may ask for this to be reimbursed to you. For example: if you paid for a mold technician to come to your home and inspect it, and they provided you with a report and photos. You may ask to have that fee reimbursed to you, and don't forget to provide the Residential Tenancy Branch with the report and the photos. This does not mean that you will receive this money back, but you can put in a request. It's important to be clear and concise about what it is you want. Here are some examples:

- I would like the homeowner to arrange a mold inspection with a qualified professional
- I can see mold and would like the homeowner to have it professionally removed
- I am having health issues and feel they are caused by mold in the home
- I would like to move and break my lease with no penalty

These are just some examples; your situation is specific to you. When you go through this process make sure you take the emotions out of it and always be calm, diplomatic and exact.

We hope this information helps your situation and your communications with your landlord.

1-855-483-1090

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