

# Landlord Checklist for Preventing Mold in Apartments

## About mold in buildings

Molds and fungi are naturally-occurring organisms that are found everywhere, both indoors and out. Problems occur when conditions indoors allow for mold growth. The primary culprit for mold growth is too much moisture. Maintaining your building to prevent moisture and promptly fixing any moisture problems will prevent mold growth.

Mold can be a health problem for your tenant. Mold is a common trigger of asthma attacks. In Connecticut, 10% of adults and children have asthma, and many others have allergies to mold. Preventing mold growth will make your apartment healthier for your tenants.

### A properly maintained and dry apartment will:

- Create a healthier indoor environment.
- Reduce the likelihood of costly repairs.
- Reduce the number of tenant complaints.

Landlords and tenants share the responsibility of preventing moisture and mold in an apartment. Landlords should follow this simple two-step process to properly prevent mold growth in their buildings. Preventing leaks and moisture problems and fixing water damage quickly are the keys to preventing mold growth in rental units.

## Step 1. Moisture Maintenance and Repairs

Perform these simple tasks in units prior to tenants moving in:

- ☐ Repair any exterior building leaks that let water into the building.
- ☐ Ensure good drainage around the building:
  - ☐ Gutters and downspouts should be connected and clear of debris.
  - ☐ Grade soil away, not towards, the building.
  - ☐ Test drainage with a hose.
  - ☐ Clean out drain pipes if clogged.
- ☐ Repair any plumbing leaks, including tightening clamps on washing machine connections. Vent all dryers to the outside.
- ☐ Insulate cold water piping.

- ☐ Install kitchen and bath fans that are vented to the outside.
- ☐ Seal, caulk, and replace broken glass on old windows to minimize air leakage, or replace with new windows.
- ☐ Replace any drywall, insulation, carpet/pad, and (if necessary) wood surfaces that have been wet for more than 48 hours.
- ☐ Install dehumidifiers in areas with chronic high humidity (60% relative humidity or higher), such as basements and crawlspaces.
- ☐ Never put materials that are prone to mold growth in contact with an uninsulated basement floor:
  - ☐ Remove all carpets from uninsulated basement slabs.
  - ☐ Limit storage of tenant personal items in an uninsulated basement.
  - ☐ If necessary, provide tenants with utility shelves for storage of personal items.
- ☐ Install towel racks (one per occupant) in the bathroom.
- ☐ Install or provide a device that monitors relative humidity (RH). Inform tenants to contact you if the RH is consistently above 60%.
- ☐ Post a copy of ***Tenant's Checklist for Preventing Mold in an Apartment*** in a prominent location in the apartment. Review it with each tenant.

## Step 2. Annual Moisture Inspection of Rental Units

Conduct a moisture inspection every year and between tenants. Check the following areas for wet spots, condensation, leaks, or water stains (often an indicator of past leaks). Insects and insect damage may also be a sign of water problems.

- ☐ Plumbing under sinks and in the basement
- ☐ Windows and doors
- ☐ Around tubs, showers, sinks, and toilets
- ☐ Roofs and attics
- ☐ Ceilings and walls
- ☐ Carpets
- ☐ Washing machine connections
- ☐ Basements and crawlspaces

*For more information, please contact:*

**Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program**

**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**(860) 509-7740 -or- DPH.EOHA@ct.gov**

**<https://ct.gov/dph/mold>**

### Acknowledgement:

This checklist is based on the Maine Indoor Air Quality Council's *Landlord Checklist for Preventing Mold in Apartments*: <https://maineindoorair.org/iag-in-rental-properties/>