

# GOT MOLD?

## SAWMILL OPERATORS TAKE NOTE!

The lumber industry has been subjected to all manner of criticism and regulation because of the perception among a few radical groups that the industry is irresponsible. This is contrary to the fact that sawmill owners recognize their dependence on sustainable forestry practices to stay in business. The lumber companies have done more to protect and enhance their forestry resources and protect the environment than all of the environmental groups put together. Now the lumber companies are facing a new threat based on fear-mongering and misinformation. It has to do with **MOLD**.

Molds live in the soil, on plants and on dead or decaying matter. Outdoors, molds play a key role in the breakdown of leaves, wood and other plant debris. Molds belong to the kingdom of Fungi, and unlike plants, they lack chlorophyll and must survive by digesting plant materials, using plant and other organic materials for food. Without molds, our environment would be overwhelmed with large amounts of dead plant matter.

Molds have been with us since prehistoric times. They produce tiny spores for reproduction, just as plants

produce seeds. Their spores can be found everywhere, wafting through the air both indoors and out. Some molds are beneficial sources of antibiotics, flavor enhancers for cheese and even account for the character of fine wines. Others cause unsightly appearance on and deterioration of household items (mildew) or lead to decay and rot in structures. In some instances molds can be the cause of allergies and that is the focus of the radicals.

On the following page is a document from the National Center for Environmental Health that puts the problem of mold in homes in proper perspective. We have added excerpts from a couple of internet sites illustrating the radical elements' position on mold. It is the latter that has become the driving force for consumers to reject all lumber tainted with sapstain or any indication of mold. If you go to some of the web sites you will find that lawyers are heavily involved. Some believe it is the very best thing since asbestos insulation and arsenic in water.

So – **GOT MOLD?** What can you do about it? How can you avoid the rejection of a lumber shipment by your distributor or lumber yard customer

because of mold? The answer is BRITEWOOD® Sapstain Control chemicals from Contechem. We can help you to stop the mold before it starts.

Mold will infect green lumber within 24-48 hours after it is cut. Therefore, timely treatment with BRITEWOOD is a must. But it can not be haphazard treatment. The mill hands must be trained to monitor the treating system, its operating parameters and the make up of the treating solution. You can depend on Contechem to educate everyone involved with every aspect of anti-stain treatment. And, we are on call at any time to work with them to stop mold and ensure the quality of your product.

One other thought – We would like for you to join us in getting out the word that the sawmill owners are doing all they can to eliminate mold from building materials. They are not part of the problem. The radicals who are mostly self-serving and expecting compensation for their own careless exposure to mold need to be educated on proper construction and ventilation techniques to eliminate moisture conditions that foster unsightly (not necessarily dangerous) molds.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT *Stachybotrys chartarum* AND OTHER MOLDS

Excerpts from the Centers for Disease Control web-site ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)):

**Q1. I heard about toxic molds that grow in homes and other buildings. Should I be concerned about a serious health risk to me and my family?**

A. The hazards presented by molds that may contain mycotoxins should be considered the same as other common molds which can grow in your house. There is always a little mold everywhere – in the air and on many surfaces. There are very few case reports that toxic molds (those containing certain mycotoxins) inside homes can cause unique or rare, health conditions such as pulmonary hemorrhage or memory loss. These case reports are rare, and a casual link between the presence of the toxic mold and these conditions has not been proven. A common-sense approach should be used for any mold contamination existing inside buildings and homes. The common health concerns from molds include hay-fever like allergic symptoms. Certain individuals with chronic respiratory disease (chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, asthma) may experience difficulty breathing. Individuals with immune suppression may be at risk for infection from molds. If you or your family members have these conditions, a qualified medical clinician should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment. For the most part, one should take routine measures to prevent mold growth in the home.

**Q2. How common is mold, including *Stachybotrys chartarum* (also known by its synonym *Stachybotrys atra*) in buildings?**

A. Molds are very common in buildings and homes and will grow anywhere indoors where there is

moisture. The most common indoor molds are *Cladosporium*, *Penicillium*, *Aspergillus*, and *Alternaria*. We do not have accurate information about how often *Stachybotrys chartarum* is found in buildings and homes. While it is less common than other mold species it is not rare.

**Q3. How do molds get in the indoor environment and how do they grow?**

A. Molds naturally grow in the indoor environment. Mold spores may also enter your house through open doorways, windows, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. Spores in the air outside also attach themselves to people and animals, making clothing, shoes, bags, and pets convenient vehicles for carrying mold indoors.

When mold spores drop on places where there is excessive moisture, such as where leakage may have occurred in roofs, pipes, walls, plant pots, or where there has been flooding, they will grow. Many building materials provide suitable nutrients that encourage mold to grow. Wet cellulose materials, including paper and paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles, wood, and wood products, are particularly conducive for the growth of some molds. Other materials such as dust, paints, wall-paper, insulation materials, dry-wall, carpet, fabric, and upholstery, commonly support mold growth.

**Q4. What is *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*)?**

A. *Stachybotrys chartarum* (also known by its synonym *Stachybotrys atra*) is a greenish-black mold. It can grow on material with a high cellulose and low nitrogen content, such as fiberboard, gyp-

sum board, paper, dust, and lint. Growth occurs when there is moisture from water damage, excessive humidity, water leaks, condensation, water infiltration, or flooding. Constant moisture is required for its growth. It is not necessary, however, to determine what type of mold you may have. All molds should be treated the same with respect to potential health risks and removal.

**Q5. Are there any circumstances where people should vacate a home or other building because of mold?**

A. These decisions have to be made individually. If you believe you are ill because of exposure to mold in a building, you should consult your physician to determine the appropriate action to take.

**Q6. Who are the people who are most at risk for health problems associated with exposure to mold?**

A. People with allergies may be more sensitive to molds. People with immune suppression or underlying lung disease are more susceptible to fungal infections.

**Q7. How do you know if you have a mold problem?**

A. Large mold infestations can usually be seen or smelled.

**Q8. Does *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) cause acute idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhage among infants?**

A. To date, a possible association between acute idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhage among infants and *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) has not been proved. Further studies are needed to determine what causes acute idiopathic hemorrhage.

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**Q9. What if my child has acute idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhage?**

- A. Parents should ensure that their children get proper medical treatment.

**Q10. What are the potential health effects of mold in buildings and homes?**

- A. Mold exposure does not always present a health problem indoors. However some people are sensitive to molds. These people may experience symptoms such as nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, or wheezing when exposed to molds. Some people may have more severe reactions to molds. Severe reactions may occur among workers exposed to large amounts of molds in occupational settings, such as farmers working around moldy hay. Severe reactions may include fever and shortness of breath. People with chronic illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may develop mold infections in their lungs.

**Q11. How do you get the molds out of buildings, including homes, schools, and places of employment?**

- A. In most cases mold can be removed by a thorough cleaning with bleach and water. If you have an extensive amount of mold and you do not think you can manage the cleanup

on your own, you may want to contact a professional who has experience in cleaning mold in buildings and homes.

**Q12. What should people do if they determine they have *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) in their buildings or homes?**

- A. Mold growing in homes and buildings, whether it is *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) or other molds, indicates that there is a problem with water or moisture. This is the first problem that needs to be addressed. Mold can be cleaned off surfaces with a weak bleach solution. Mold under carpets typically requires that the carpets be removed. Once mold starts to grow in insulation or wallboard the only way to deal with the problem is by removal and replacement. We do not believe that one needs to take any different precautions with *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*), than with other molds. In areas where flooding has occurred, prompt cleaning of walls and other flood-damaged items with water mixed with chlorine bleach, diluted 10 parts water to 1 part bleach, is necessary to prevent mold growth. Never mix bleach with ammonia. Moldy items should be discarded.

**Q13. How do you keep mold out of buildings and homes?**

- A. As part of routine building

maintenance, buildings should be inspected for evidence of water damage and visible mold. The conditions causing mold (such as water leaks, condensation, infiltration, or flooding) should be corrected to prevent mold from growing.

**Specific Recommendations:**

Keep humidity level in house below 50%.

Use air conditioner or a dehumidifier during humid months. Be sure home has adequate ventilation, including exhaust fans in kitchen and bathrooms.

Use mold inhibitors which can be added to paints.

Clean bathroom with mold killing products.

Do not carpet bathrooms.

Remove and replace flooded carpets.

**Summary:** In summary, *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) and other molds may cause health symptoms that are nonspecific. At present there is no test that proves an association between *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) and particular health symptoms. Individuals with persistent symptoms should see their physician. However, if *Stachybotrys chartarum* (*stachybotrys atra*) or other molds are found in a building, prudent practice recommends that they be removed. Use the simplest and most expedient method that properly and safely removes mold.

## EXTREME IDEAS ABOUT MOLD

### Excerpts from various web sites found on the internet:

Mold growing inside a building is unhealthy, no matter what kind. All molds produce chemicals, which can be released to cause allergies, or mycot oxicosis inside a building.

### [www.mold-help.com](http://www.mold-help.com):

- YOU CAN'T ALWAYS SEE IT
- YOU CAN'T ALWAYS SMELL IT
- YOU CAN'T ALWAYS TASTE IT
- YOU CAN'T ALWAYS FEEL IT
- NOR CAN YOU EVER HEAR IT
- BUT YOU SHOULD CERTAINLY FEAR IT!

### [www.atoxicmoldattorneyforyou.com](http://www.atoxicmoldattorneyforyou.com):

“A Toxic Mold Attorney for You is a guide to the many aspects of mold and the potentially fatal dangers it poses. We hope to provide important information for those who have been affected by Toxic Mold and wish to learn more about their legal rights.”

### [www.themoldsource.com](http://www.themoldsource.com):

“Whether you are a tenant or a landlord, a new home buyer or a home builder, a real estate agency client or a realtor, borrower or lender, an insured party or an insurance company, if mold contamination should be discovered in a property (residential or commercial) in which you are or were involved, there are a large number of powerful causes of action (lawsuits) available to a plaintiff. These include but are not limited to:

- Negligence, the most common cause of action asserted for mold contamination
- Strict liability – especially against new home builders
- Breach of warranties against builders, sellers, and landlords
- Failure to disclose in the sale or rental of property
- Breach of contract
- Fraud
- Violations of unfair competition and consumer protection laws
- Violations of professional licensing laws
- Worker’ compensation – against employers
- Violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act

The above are the grounds for mold contamination lawsuits.”

### [www.themoldsource.com](http://www.themoldsource.com):

“Toxic mold measure signed: Gov. Davis approves the fungus regulations and other bills to improve environmental quality.”

“An insidious and sometimes invisible invader, toxic mold has forced people from their homes and businesses, and has been suspected in illnesses including respiratory distress and severe allergies.”

“California again will be the leader in tackling a major policy issue,” said Sen. Deborah Ortiz, author of SB 732. “The challenge is on.”

“Erin Brockovich supported the legislation because her sprawling Agoura Hills home was infested with toxic mold.” (She torched it.)

