

## A GUIDE TO INDOOR AIR QUALITY INSPECTIONS

### PART 1

**Introduction:** Most of us spend much of our time indoors. Four basic factors that influence Indoor Air Quality: 1. The occupants. 2. The HVAC system. 3. Possible pollutant pathways. 4. Possible contaminant sources. The air that we breathe in our homes can put us at risk for health problems. Some pollutants can be chemicals, gases, living organisms like molds and pests, home furnishings, cooking, heating, water vapor and tobacco smoke. Studies have shown that indoor air can be as much as 100 times more polluted than outside air. People with chronic respiratory and immune system ailments are more susceptible to these pollutants. The majority of ailments diagnosed by physicians are related to bad indoor air.

Inspection points include:

- A. Moisture problems: 1. Clean up water spills. 2. Repair all plumbing leaks. 3. Keep indoor humidity low between 30 and 50 percent. 4. Check for condensation on the inside of windows; these are signs of high humidity.
- B. Venting to the exterior: 1. Vent appliances that produce moisture such as cloth dryers and stoves. 2. Run bathroom exhaust fans during and then at least 10 minutes after showers. 3. Open windows regularly with the AC fan set at "On" to bring in fresh outdoor air. 4. Inspect for any rusted areas and located cause of moisture.
- C. AC System: 1. Keep return air compartments clean and clear of furnishings. 2. Condensate pipes should be insulated to keep moisture from forming. 3. Replace filters regularly with a MERV 4-10 (minimum efficiency reporting value).
- D. Gas fired appliances: 1. Make sure an ample supply of secondary combustion air is available. 2. Carbon monoxide detectors should be installed near these appliances. Carbon monoxide gases are caused by incomplete combustion of the fossil fuels.
- E. Carpets: 1. Use high quality vacuum cleaners and filters. 2. Clean regularly. 3. Do not allow moisture to come in contact with and remain in the carpet.
- F. Cleansers: 1. Do not keep an over abundance of cleansers in any one place such as under the kitchen sink. Caustic gases will form even when containers are closed. 2. Do not over use cleansers. 3. Dispose old cleansers as soon as possible. 4. Keep the phone number for a poison control center within site.
- G. Plants: 1. Do not keep an abundance of plants or excessively large plants that require too much water. This will allow too much moisture in the air.
- H. Asbestos: Pre-1970 home structures. Used as insulation for heating and cooling pipes. It may look like white plaster or corrugated cardboard. Do not disturb. Call a qualified specialist.
- I. Lead based paint: Pre-1978 home structures. Do not disturb. Call a qualified specialist.
- J. Mold: 1. The Inspector shall perform: a non-invasive, visual examination of the readily accessible, visible, and installed systems and components of the building; moisture, temperature, and humidity measurements. 2. The Inspector Shall Report: moisture intrusion, water damage, musty odors, apparent mold growth, conditions conducive to mold growth.
- K. Air duct cleaning: The EPA states that air duct cleaning has never shown to prevent health problems. Light amount of house hold duct in the air ducts do not pose any health risks. Clean only if there is a substantial visible mold or vermin problem. The cause of dirty air ducts must first be found and corrected before cleaning. No cleaning chemicals should be used.
- L. Ozone generators as air cleaners: The EPA does not recommend or has never approved air cleaning devices or manufacturers. Ozone is a toxic gas that when inhaled can damage lungs, cause chest pains, coughing, shortness of breath and throat irritation.
- M. Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC): These compounds are emitted from adhesives, carpet, upholstery, manufactured wood products and cleaning agents. These components should be allowed to de-gas two to three days before occupying the house.
- N. Biological pollutants: 1. Animal dander such as scales from hair, feathers or skin. 2. Dust mites and cockroach parts. 3. Infectious agents such as bacteria or viruses that are passed from person to person.

- O. Room humidifiers: The US Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued a safety alert for dirty humidifiers which may cause health problems. Bacteria and fungi grow in the tank, are turned into a fine mist, enter the lungs and cause infections.

Inspection points not included: 1. Taking air and mold samples. Sampling seldom provides causes of problems. 2. Giving medical advice. Always seek the advice of a professional physician.



## VISUAL MOLD INSPECTION PART 2

### **Introduction and Scope of Visual Mold Inspection**

The purpose of this standard is to provide standardized procedures to be used for a visual mold inspection. The inspection will be performed at the primary building. Detached structures shall be inspected separately and billed additional fees. A visual mold inspection is valid for the date of the inspection and cannot predict future mold growth. Because conditions conducive to mold growth in a building can vary greatly over time, the results of a mold inspection can only be relied upon for the point in time at which the inspection was conducted. A visual mold inspection is not intended to eliminate the uncertainty or the risk of the presence of mold or the adverse effects mold may cause to a building or its occupants. No outdoor or indoor air samples or indoor spore samples will be collected.

### **The Visual Mold Inspection**

- The Inspector shall perform: a non-invasive, visual examination of the readily accessible, visible, and installed systems and components of the building; moisture, temperature, and humidity measurements.
- The Inspector Shall Report: moisture intrusion, water damage, musty odors, apparent mold growth, conditions conducive to mold growth. Inspector shall state why a listed system or component was not inspected.

### **Standards of Practice**

- Roof: the Inspector shall inspect from the ground level or eaves: the roof covering, the roof drainage system, vents, flashings, skylights, chimneys and any other roof penetration.
- Exteriors and grounds: the Inspector shall inspect from the ground level: cladding, flashing, trim, exterior doors, windows, decks, steps and porches. Exterior grading and items that penetrate the exterior siding or covering materials.
- Foundation crawlspace: the Inspector shall inspect foundation, crawlspace, ventilation and signs of moisture intrusion. There is an extra fee for this service.
- Heating, Cooling and Ventilation: the Inspector shall inspect the air handler, circulating fan, air filter, condensate pump, readily visible ductwork, representative number of supply and return air register and the central air conditioning unit.
- Plumbing: the Inspector shall inspect: the readily visible main and supply water lines, readily visible drain, waste and vent pipes, hot water source, toilets, faucets, showers and tubs.

- The Inspector is not required to: test the showers, tubs, whirlpools, saunas or hot tubs by filling them with water. Inspect for plumbing defects that are not related to mold growth or moisture intrusion.
- Attic, Ventilation and Insulation: the Inspector shall inspect: insulation, ventilation of attic spaces, framing and sheathing.
- The Inspector is not required to: move, touch or disturb insulation, inspect for vapor retarders, break or otherwise damage the surface finish or weather seal on or around access panels and covers.
- Interior: the Inspector shall inspect: walls, ceiling, floors, doors, windows, ventilation in the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry rooms.
- The Inspector is not required to: inspect for interior defects that are not related to mold growth or moisture intrusion.
- Moisture, Humidity and Temperature: the Inspector shall measure: moisture of any room or area of the building that has moisture intrusion, water damage, moldy odors, apparent mold growth and/or conditions conducive to mold growth. Humidity, temperature of any room or area of the building at the Inspectors discretion.
- The Inspector will not take indoor or outdoor air samples or take indoor spore samples.

#### **Limitations**

The mold inspection is not a warranty, guarantee, insurance policy or technically exhaustive. The mold inspection will not identify mold growth or species not readily visible at the time of the inspection and will not include future conditions. Mold samples will not be taken.

**Exclusions:** The Inspector is not required to report: the condition, service life expectancy, size, capacity, BTUs, performance or efficiency of any system or component that is not readily accessible. This is not a code compliance inspection.

- The Inspector is not required to: report replacement or repair cost estimates. Lift carpeting or padding. Move any personal items or other obstructions to the inspection. Dismantle, open or uncover any system or component. Enter or access any areas that the Inspector deems unsafe or that may damage personal property.
- The Inspector is not required to operate: any system that is shut down, not functioning properly, that does not turn on with the use of normal operating controls. Any water shut-off or fuel valves. Any electrical disconnects or over-current protection devices. Any irrigation or sprinkler systems.

**BY MY SIGNATURE BELOW, I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I HAVE READ THIS CONTRACT AND THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS, IF ANY; THAT I UNDERSTAND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND THAT I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS. I AM THE CLIENT SIGNING HERE OR I AM A REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE CLIENT. IF I WAS NOT PRESENT DURING THE INSPECTION TO SIGN THIS DOCUMENT, THEN MY PAYMENT TO YOU ACKNOWLEDGES MY ACCEPTANCE OF THE TERMS OF THIS CONTRACT.**

CLIENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

INSPECTION ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CELLULAR # \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

STAR BRITE INSPECTOR \_\_\_\_\_

**It is recommended that Client walk thru the property again the day before closing. This is to assure conditions have not been altered to your disadvantage.**

**FRANK ADAME, PROFESSIONAL HOME INSPECTOR  
TREC LICENSE # 10235  
MOLD CERTIFIED INSPECTOR**

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