

Mold Investigation Protocols

Environment, Health & Safety, University of California, Berkeley [↗](#)

EH&S investigates mold complaints in campus buildings to determine the health risks and provide remediation guidance. The following procedures outline the campus response.

Mold Reported to EH&S

EH&S receives concerns and complaints about mold from University employees and students, reporting a mold odor, visible mold growth, or perhaps the manifestation of assorted physical symptoms reported by one or more building occupants that might be attributed to mold.

EH&S Investigation

1. EH&S contacts the facility manager to discuss the issue and understand the concerns and circumstances. Mold guidance documents are provided and made available to all parties involved.
2. Interview with affected persons – EH&S interviews the complainants and others in the workplace or residence to determine what kind of symptoms are experienced, by whom, and when (e.g. are symptoms only experienced while at work?). The interview attempts to determine if symptoms may be related to mold, or to some other aspect of indoor air quality such as ventilation, particulate matter, off-gassing, etc.
3. For mold concerns in student housing, EH&S ensures that residents are aware of the Residence Hall Terms & Conditions section (page 10) of their housing contract which describes their responsibilities for maintenance of their space.
4. Site inspection - EH&S conducts a physical inspection of the workplace or residence to look for evidence of mold growth, mold odors, water intrusion, or other factors that influence the presence of mold.
5. Report of investigation – EH&S provides a final report to the complainant, facility manager, and other stakeholders, that outlines the findings of the investigation and remediation recommendations which may include the following:
 - Mold reference documents to provide supplemental information to occupants about the hazards of mold and methods of control
 - Work Order recommendations for Facilities Services or RSSP to repair conditions that allow water intrusion, remove moisture or wet surfaces, or to remove visible mold
 - HEPA air cleaner loaners from EH&S to help reduce the presence of airborne particulates that may contribute to occupant symptoms
 - Discuss the option to have EH&S collect air samples to determine the momentary difference in bioaerosols between the outside of the building and the interior space that is in question.
 - Consideration to obtain inspection by a third-party consultant (typically only in extraordinary cases).

Mold Investigation Protocols

Environment, Health & Safety, University of California, Berkeley [↗](#)

Facilities Services Response

Based on work orders submitted by EH&S, a department representative, or a building manager, Facilities Services, or RSSP Trades, will:

- Initiate repairs to eliminate water intrusion sources (e.g. repairs pipes, windows, etc.)
- Clean or repair damaged structural members (e.g. flooring, ceiling, walls etc.)

The response time to mold-related work orders may be prioritized based on the level of health risks to building occupants and the availability of funds to make the repairs, which must all be balanced against other work orders across the campus.

Campus Department Response

The campus department with the affected employee(s) or resident(s) should follow guidance provided by EH&S which may include the use of HEPA air cleaners, or relocation of affected occupants to keep them out of the areas in which mold may be present.

The affected department should notify employees or occupants of the potential presence of mold growth so that anyone with known sensitivities to mold are aware of the problem.

Departments can clean mold on surfaces if they see fit; guidance is provided in the EH&S mold fact sheet referenced below.

Work orders for repairs may be submitted by the affected department, if not done so by EH&S.

Costs associated with hiring a consultant to investigate mold conditions beyond the scope of EH&S are typically the responsibility of the department responsible for the space. In some cases, EH&S may take on these costs, but this is a case-by-case consideration.

Additional Information About Mold

Please review the following considerations about mold that influence the campus response and the mold resources provided below.

1. There are no established standards for mold or mold spore exposure. This is one of the reasons that testing for mold, to quantify it and determine associated species of mold, is not recommended. Information on the health effects of mold can be found in the links below.

Mold Investigation Protocols

Environment, Health & Safety, University of California, Berkeley [↗](#)

2. Mold is ubiquitous in the environment. It is present practically everywhere, indoors and outdoors. The goal of the campus is to prevent the *proliferation* of mold due to circumstances that have allowed water intrusion or excessive moisture to occur. Without sufficient levels of water and organic materials on which to grow, mold will not proliferate. In other words: control the moisture, control the mold.
3. Facilities Services and RSSP will provide prompt response to emergency water intrusion, such as flooding caused by plumbing leaks or rain. The goal is to respond within 48 hours to dry surfaces so that mold cannot grow, and to prevent further water intrusion. After that, surfaces damaged by the water intrusion can be cleaned, or removed and replaced.

Mold Resources

4. There are many mold resources available online. EH&S has compiled the following resources:
 - o [UC Berkeley EH&S Mold Fact Sheet](#)
 - o [University Health Services, Facts About Mold](#)
 - o [California Department of Public Health, Statement on Building dampness, Mold, and Health](#)
 - o [Mold FAQ's and symptoms](#), Center for Disease Control
 - o [California Department of Public Health](#), Molds in Indoor Workplaces
 - o [Federal Law on mold](#)
 - o [“Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings” \(EPA402-K-01-001\)](#)