



Notice

No: 09-11

APPLICABLE TO:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Municipal & Private Non Profit
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Co-operatives
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Rent Supplement

DATE: September 4, 2009

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory
<input type="checkbox"/>	For Information

SUBJECT: Preventative Maintenance Program - Mould Prevention

Background

Since the late 1960's, changes in building construction practices have led to decreased natural air infiltration and air exchange rates so that air pollutants within buildings are not diluted or removed as quickly as they once were. Furthermore, these building construction changes have also led to increased indoor humidity.

The indoor environment in any building is a result of the interaction between the site, climate, building systems, construction techniques, contaminant sources (i.e., building materials, furnishings, and moisture content), and occupants. Indoor air contaminants, such as mould spores, can originate within the building or be drawn in from the outdoors.

In recent years, current trends in mould-related litigation claims, as well as heightened media exposure to the possible health risks associated with the formation of mould, have created a situation similar to that of the asbestos crisis of a few years ago. As people become aware of their legal rights with respect to mould, class action lawsuits against building owners are becoming more common in Canada. As a result, mould prevention has become an important maintenance issue for all building owners.

From a federal and provincial standpoint, mould poses a significant occupational, health and safety risk. Knowing this, the duty of care to protect residents and employees of a building from mould exposure falls under the responsibility of the building owners and management.

Typically, damages resulting from mould (or fungi) are not covered under a housing provider's commercial insurance policy. Most housing providers' insurance policies now include endorsements, which clearly exclude damages related to mould. As a result, housing providers may be faced with significant repair/remedial costs related to mould removal, which will affect their operating and/or capital budgets and may impact overall financial viability.

The only option for housing providers is to ensure that a comprehensive mould prevention program is in place.

Mould Prevention

NRH requires housing providers' preventative maintenance programs to include a mould prevention program.

The following are important components of a mould prevention program:

- Assignment of responsibilities for key personnel
- Training objectives and goals
- A mould inspection schedule
- Proactive planning and management of renovation projects and maintenance/repair contractors
- Procedures to minimize potential moisture/water intrusions
- Identification of mould growth and determination of the extent of damage
- Guidelines for response to a moisture/water condition
- Guidelines for remediation of mould-containing building materials
- Proper documentation of a moisture/water condition or mould growth
- Communication with affected parties during and following a moisture/water condition or mould growth

As noted in *NRH Notice 09-08*, a preventative maintenance workshop (delivered by SHSC), is scheduled for September 2009. All housing providers are encouraged to attend this workshop to develop their own workable preventative maintenance plan for their own buildings. A mould prevention program is an important component of a preventative maintenance plan and must form part of the overall plan required for all housing providers.

Service Manager's Role

Niagara Regional Housing will ensure compliance with this Notice through the operational review process.

Housing Provider's Role

Housing providers are required to include a comprehensive mould prevention and remediation program as a component of their preventative maintenance program.

For more information regarding the health risks associated with mould, and for tips on developing a mould prevention program, please visit the following websites:

1. Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation:

"Fighting Mold - The Homeowners' Guide"

http://cmhc.gc.ca/en/co/maho/yohoyohe/momo/momo_005.cfm

"The Tenant's Guide to Mold"

http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/reho/reho_001.cfm

2. Environment Canada - Canadian Environmental Protection Act:

“Residential Indoor Air Quality Guideline for Moulds”

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/CEPARRegistry/notices/NoticeText.cfm?intNotice=400&intDocument=2692>

3. Canadian Construction Association:

“Standard Construction Document CCA 82-2004”

<http://www.cca-acc.com/documents/cca82/cca82.pdf>

4. Social Housing Services Corporation: <http://www.shscorp.ca>

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact your Housing Administrator or Sean Sissons, Asset Administrator at (905) 682-9201.

Lora Beckwith, General Manager