



Everything You Wanted Know About Mold

Mold is a hot topic in the news lately and has recently been related to workplace safety and health. At a recent conference, safety experts discussed some things that you might not know about mold and workplace exposure.

- 1. It's everywhere!** Mold is considered by experts to be present everywhere and on all types of surfaces, including in the air, in some concentration. Mold is a fungus which is a living organism, and experiences a life cycle. This means that the concentration of mold in an area is in a constant state of flux-constantly growing, reproducing, and dying.
- 2. You can water down the problem.** Mold is a very good indicator of a water problem. In a lot of cases, if you remove excess water in your building, you will eliminate a mold problem. A lack of moisture will limit the growth of mold inside buildings.
- 3. Refrain from sampling, at least at first.** There are many ways to sample and test and more than 100,000 types of mold. Not all species of mold will indicate an accurate result unless it is subjected to the appropriate sampling and testing method for its species. Sampling from the get-go can be quite expensive if you are not sure you have a mold problem and most mold problems require multiple samples. If your facility is suspected to contain high levels of mold, experts recommend you conduct an assessment before you grab a sample and send it off to the lab.

In an evaluation of your facility ask yourself--Can you see mold? Smell it? Do you have a water problem? Are you susceptible to flooding or water damage? What are the seasonal variations of your area? Do you live by a body of water that puts excessive moisture in the air? Do you have a poor or outdated ventilation system in your facility? If the answer is "yes," then you should talk to a safety & health expert about the types of mold you may have in your facility.



“Oh my goodness Billy. I think it’s...
MOLD!”

4. There are no exposure levels of mold. Because humans are exposed to immunosuppressive drugs, such as prednisone and chemotherapy, and disorders like diabetes, no permissible exposure levels have been set for mold. It has been proven that children, the elderly and immune-compromised people can have an aggravated response to mold. Experts also said that people can become allergic to mold and may have a predisposition to mold allergies. However right now there is no effort to correlate health effects and mold exposure.

5. Bleach kills mold, so what! Bleach will kill actively growing fungi, including the spores, BUT, the dead spores can still cause an allergic response. The best way to rid mold is to eliminate excess water in your facility.

6. You shouldn't terminate a sick employee because of a mold-related illness. If you have an employee who is convinced he/she has a workplace mold allergy and has the support of a doctor, experts suggest it may be more cost effective to accommodate the employee. Even if worker's compensation finds minimal mold counts in your facility and denies a claim, if you terminate the employee you may open yourself up for a lawsuit. Because there is very little legislature regarding mold, a lot of claims come down to the "battle of the experts" and this could get pricey. If possible, you can offer options like telecommuting to accommodate the worker. If you cannot accommodate the employee, make sure you consult a safety & health professional to combat the claims and speak to your attorney before you terminate the employee.

2006 Dates:

January:

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February:

Child Passenger Safety Week

March:

Poison Prevention Week
Workplace Eye Safety Month
Save Your Vision Month

April:

Sports Eye Safety Month
Intl Building Safety Week
Work Zone Aware. Week
Playground Safety Week

May:

Clean Air Month
Melanoma Awareness Month
Electrical Safety Month
National EMS Week
Poison Prevention Week

June:

National Safety Month

July:

EYE INJURY PREV. MONTH

August:

Prepare Your Winter Safety Training!

September:

Farm Safety /Health Week

October:

Nat. Fire Prevention Week
Drive Safely Work Week
Radon Action Week

November:

Take advantage of the weather and do your classroom training!

December:

"3D Month" - National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention Month



Exercise Determined To Be Valuable In Treating Injuries

A review of the literature by a team of researchers in the Netherlands points to the benefits of exercise over other methods to treat work-related upper body complaints. The scientists looked at other conservative interventions such as relaxation, ultrasound, biofeedback, and workplace adjustments. It appeared that exercise was more beneficial than other methods, including use of special keyboards and office furniture.

The lead researcher and physical therapist said the results did not surprise the researchers. "We are evidence-based people, and exercise seems to be the best intervention from this review. That's what I do. When I treat patients, I know that they almost always get better."

Because the findings came from workplaces where workers' compensation was provided, observers said it is important to determine whether the findings measured interventions, or if social or psychosocial issues might be involved.

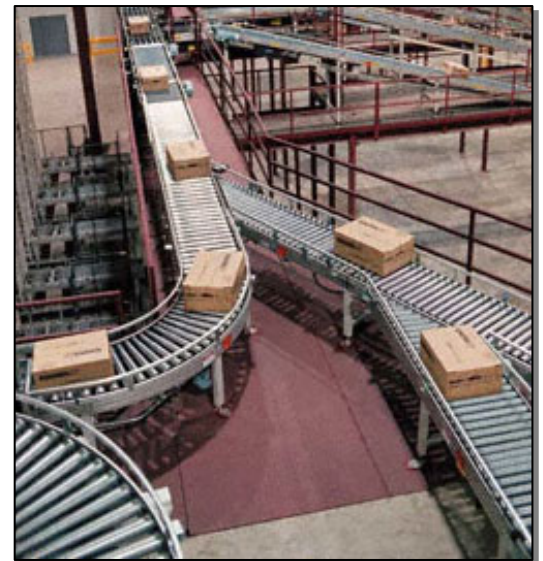
Saving Money Can Be Dangerous - Conveyors

According to the Federal Government (Mine Safety and Health Administration - MSHA), when obtaining any conveyor system, avoid getting a lower price by eliminating safety features. Fatalities have occurred when safety features were not used along conveyor belts. Compare systems with all standard safety features manufacturers have to offer.

According to conveyor manufacturers, features commonly deleted from systems to "save" money are:

- Safety pull cords along the conveyor
- Stop buttons at critical locations
- Backstops (roll-back protection)
- Start-up warning systems (audible and visual)
- Lockout devices
- Guards

When compared to the overall cost of a conveyor system, these important features represent a small portion of the total cost and should be considered an investment. Such features are vital in protecting workers from inadvertent contact with conveyor belts.



Cambridge Risk Control believes that safety and health should not be an option.

Is stretching a dollar worth the risk?

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Safety Resource Center

It's Good To Know:

September is...

"National Food Safety Month"

September 17 – 23 is:

"Farm safety & Health Week"

Upcoming Training

"Safety Training Methods"

National Safety Council

Myrtle Beach, SC

803-732-6778

Safety Information:

The National Safety Council (www.nsc.org) is a tremendous safety information resource. They're available 24 hours per day by visiting their website:

www.nsc.org/

