

Loss Control Services – 5 Minute Safety Topic

Three Common Maintenance Hazards: Mold, Asbestos, Lead

Mold

- Mold grows and becomes a problem where there is water damage, high humidity, or dampness.
- Molds can be found in any color: white, orange, green, brown, or black.
- Molds often have a musty or earthy odor and may not be visible – hidden behind walls/ceilings.
Clean and dry surfaces to prevent mold.

- Scour sinks and tubs, clean garbage pails and refrigerator door gaskets and drip pans frequently.
- An effective disinfectant is 10% chlorine bleach, or 1½ cups bleach per gallon of water.
- Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24-48 hours.
- Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, and dry completely.
- Throw away moldy absorbent items like ceiling tiles or carpeting.

Areas involving highly dense mold growth and/or large/multiple surfaces should be professionally evaluated and may have to be remediated using hazardous material containment and monitoring.

Asbestos

- Used prior to 1980 for insulation and fire protection.
- It can also be found on pipe work and ductwork, and on boilers.
- It is not hazardous if it is intact (non-friable). Friable asbestos is easily crumbled with hand force.
- A health hazard occurs when the asbestos fibers become airborne and are inhaled.
- Asbestos removal requires specially trained workers.

Lead (Pb)

- Was frequently used in construction materials such as bricks and mortar, sheet metal, mineral wool insulation, and pipes.
- Lead was also added to paint because it resists corrosion.
- Solid lead does not pose a hazard.
- Cutting, grinding, or welding will create airborne lead dust or a fume that is extremely hazardous.

Mold, asbestos and lead are all regulated by strict safety and environmental laws!

