

Mold Guidance for New Jersey Residents Recovering From Superstorm Sandy

The New Jersey Department of Health most recently released a Mold Guidelines for New Jersey Residents pamphlet created to provide direction to residents on addressing mold in homes in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. In addition, the Department is announcing a series of training classes in cooperation with the UMDNJ School of Public Health to assist homeowners, volunteers and public health and building code officials in mold removal and assessment.

Molds can cause staining of walls and ceilings and can affect building components causing property damage. Exposure to mold can cause nasal and throat irritation, coughing or wheezing, eye irritation, or, in some cases, skin irritation.

The pamphlet addresses a number of topics including mold-related health concerns, how to inspect for mold and tools and techniques for clean-up. For example:

- If mold is visually apparent, resources should be used to correct any moisture problems and clean up mold contamination rather than testing.
- For smaller areas less than 10 square feet that have been affected by mold growth, a homeowner or business owner may be capable of performing the work, but for larger areas greater than 100 square feet, a qualified contractor who has experience in mold or environmental contamination may be required.
- Those performing remediation work need to be protected with gloves, a respirator, protective clothing and goggles.

The pamphlet also includes checklists on inspection services and mold remediation to help guide residents in steps they should take when addressing mold problems in their home. The guidance also contains tips and questions to ask when hiring a consultant or remediation contractor that will help residents evaluate these professionals. Tips include:

- Make sure the contractor visits the job site rather than giving an estimate over the phone.
- Talk to the contractor and learn exactly what they will be doing on the job.

Residents can receive copies of the pamphlet by visiting http://nj.gov/health/er/hurricane_recovery_resources.shtml or calling 609-826-4950. This guidance was developed with feedback from state and federal partners as well as environmental health advocacy organizations. The brochure will also be distributed to local and county health departments and other stakeholders. A copy of the brochure can also be found attached to the release. Residents can also call 609-826-4950 to speak with the Department's Environmental and Occupation Health Assessment Program staff about mold

removal questions.

To further address the issue of mold, the Department has provided UMDNJ-School of Public Health with a \$125,000 grant to provide free training on mold assessment and removal for homeowners, volunteers and public health and building code officials. There will be 25 classes for homeowners and volunteers and 10 classes held for public health and building code officials. Through these classes, UMDNJ expects to train 1,000 homeowners and volunteers and 500 public health and building code officials.

Classes for Public Health and Building Code officials begin this month and registration information is posted on the New Jersey Learning Management Network website <https://njlmn.rutgers.edu/>.

Upcoming dates for free training are listed below:

- April 23: Rockaway Township Municipal Building
- May 14: Stafford Municipal Building
- June 27: Bergen County

Registration information for classes for homeowners and volunteers is listed on the UMDNJ-School of Public Health website <http://ophp.umdj.edu/moldtraining> and the Department of Health Hurricane Recovery website at http://nj.gov/health/er/hurricane_recovery_resources.shtml. Topics covered in this training includes awareness of mold, safe work practices, personal protective equipment, respiratory protection and best practices for remediation.

Upcoming dates for free training for Residents are:

- April 27: Atlantic County Training Center, Egg Harbor Twp.
- April 29: Rockaway Township Municipal Building, Rockaway
- May 4: Stafford Municipal Building, Manahawkin

For more information on these classes, please contact Mitchel Rosen at the UMDNJ-School of Public Health at mrosen@umdj.edu.

The Department continues to work with numerous state and federal partners to address the health issues the state faces during this recovery phase.

For more information on Department of Health Sandy Recovery initiatives, please visit: http://www.nj.gov/health/er/hurricane_recovery_resources.shtml.

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