



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Arizona Division of Emergency Management
5636 East McDowell Road, Building M5101, Phoenix, Arizona 85008-3495
(602) 244-0504 1-800-411-2336



Janice K. Brewer
GOVERNOR

MG Hugo E. Salazar
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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Public Information Contact
Janey Pearl: 602-350-4562

State Warns Against Growth of Mold in Homes, Businesses

Phoenix - After the series of storms that hit Arizona last week, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) and Arizona Division of Emergency Management (ADEM) encourage individuals and businessowners to be aware of and take precautions against the growth of mold

“Mold is a potential health risk after flooding. Spores can get into the walls and ceiling of your home or businesses, spread to other areas and cause real health problems,” said Diane Eckles, Office Chief of Environmental Health. “Those at greatest risk from exposure include infants and children, the elderly, people with asthma, and those with allergies or breathing conditions.”

Symptoms of mold exposure include stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing, difficulty in breathing, shortness of breath and skin reactions. If you or your family members have health problems after exposure to mold, contact your doctor or other health care provider.

If one’s home or business has been exposed to excess moisture or standing water for an extended period of time, there is a strong possibility mold spores are present. People’s first clue to mold infestation might be the sight of a discolored wall or ceiling, or a smell often characterized as “musty” or “earthy.”

If mold is present, you should be quick, meticulous and careful in removing it. ADHS recommends scrubbing the area with a non-ammonia soap or detergent, and then disinfecting with a solution of bleach and water. People are reminded to take safety precautions when cleaning – wear a respirator, rubber gloves and eye protection to minimize contact with floating mold spores and disinfectant fumes.

The ADHS Office of Environmental Health has answered some frequently asked questions about with a “Mold in My House: What Do I Do?” fact sheet¹. The fact sheet includes information about the detection of and health dangers posed by mold. There are also tips for how to clean up and prevent mold.

Visit the Arizona Emergency Information Network website, www.azein.gov, for real-time incident information, including links to recovery resources, and tips for getting all-hazard ready.

¹ Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Office of Environmental Health “Indoor Air Quality *Info Sheet* Mold in My Home: What Do I Do?” - http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/oeh/invsurv/air_qual/pdf/moldfact.pdf