

Tips for Hiring a Mold Remediation Contractor/Consultant

Testing for mold is generally not necessary. If you can see and smell mold in your home, you have a mold problem. However, mold is usually a symptom of a bigger problem in a home. Most of the problems are related to inadequate ventilation and a buildup of moisture. Homes with high moisture (aka high relative humidity) or stagnant water are more susceptible to mold growth. To locate the source or cause of the high humidity or stagnant water, you may need to hire a consultant or home performance specialist. For a list of Home Performance Consultants in your area, contact the Wisconsin Focus on Energy Program, a not-for-profit organization sponsored by the State of Wisconsin offering energy information and services to residential, business, and industrial customers throughout the state. You can call them at 1-800-762-7077, or visit them on the web at <http://www.focusonenergy.com> (for a list of Home Performance Consultants, follow the links for ***Your Home, Tools, and Find a Home Performance Consultant***). Home Performance Consultants conduct indoor air quality (IAQ) investigations, and can determine when structural issues exist that may be causing mold problems (such as ice dams, moisture, and heating and cooling complaints). They can help you understand why mold is growing in your home and what actions you will need to take to prevent mold growth. IAQ consultants and mold remediation contractors whose primary focus is mold also exist. For lists of these, go to <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/eh>, follow the link for ***Human health hazards*** and then click on ***Mold***.

Many consultants and contractors providing mold inspections and remediation services are honest, reliable and skilled. However, as with other consumer services it's "Buyer Beware." Here are suggestions on how to find good consultant/contractors:

(This list is based on guidelines provided by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection)

- Get more than one estimate. Make sure all parties are bidding on exactly the same work. Make sure the contractor comes to the job site rather than giving a telephone estimate. Be leery of an extremely low estimate. Be cautious of a contractor or consultant that uses SCARE tactics to make you do more than you really need to have done.
- Ask for the names of the consultant/contractor's recent customers and call to see if they are satisfied. Would they hire the contractor again?
- Did the mold consultant provide a written inspection report that included a summary of all the areas inspected, the cause of the mold growth, how to take care of the problem and any sampling results? Did the contractor show up on time, clean up afterward, perform follow-up service on warranties?
- A building cannot be made mold free. Avoid a contractor who claims to remove all mold from your building.
- Contact the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Bureau of Consumer Protection, 800-422-7128, and the Better Business Bureau, 800-273-1002, to find out if complaints were filed against the consultant or the contractor.
- Ideally, the firm that conducts the inspection or air sampling should not be financially related to a firm that conducts the mold remediation, due to a potential conflict of interest. Consulting

firms that have a financial tie to a contractor should disclose that relationship prior to any contractual agreement. Ultimately, it is the property owner's responsibility to ask about such a relationship.

- Laboratories selected for analysis of samples should be either American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) or a U.S. EPA accredited Laboratory.

If a name appears on the Department of Health and Family Service's (DHFS) Indoor Air Consultants or Mold Remediation Contractors' lists it does NOT constitute an endorsement of the company or their capabilities. It also does not imply preference over other companies not listed. These lists have been compiled from those contractors and consultants who have provided DHFS with information on what training they have undergone. The lists are provided as a resource to those interested in obtaining these specialized services, but not sure where to begin.

Neither the Federal government nor DHFS certifies consultants or contractors for conducting mold investigations or removing mold from buildings. If a consultant or contractor advertises as "State Certified" or State Endorsed," please refer their name to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Fraud Division, 1-800-422-7128, (or on the web at: <http://datcp.state.wi.us> and click on ***File Consumer Complaint***) for deceptive trade practices.

For general information and tips on hiring contractors, visit the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) on the web at <http://datcp.state.wi.us> and follow the links for consumer information.

For more information:

- Contact your local public health department or the Wisconsin Division of Public Health at (608) 266-1120.
- For additional internet resources on mold, visit the DHFS website at <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/eh>, and follow the links for "Human Health Hazards."



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