Dampness and Mold Assessment Tool
General Buildings

Form & Instructions

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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About the Form

Background

The health of those who live, attend school, or work in damp buildings has been a growing concern through the years due to a broad range of reported building-related symptoms and illnesses. Research has found that people who spend time in damp buildings are more likely to report health problems such as these:

- Respiratory symptoms (such as in nose, throat, lungs)
- Development or worsening of asthma
- Hypersensitivity pneumonitis (a rare lung disease caused by an immune system response to repeated inhalation of sensitizing substances such as bacteria, fungi, organic dusts, and chemicals)
- Respiratory infections
- Allergic rhinitis (often called "hay fever")
- Bronchitis
- Eczema

Exposures in damp buildings are complex. They vary from building to building, and in different places within a building. Moisture allows indoor mold to multiply more easily on building materials or other surfaces, and people inside buildings may be exposed to microbes and their structural components, such as spores and fungal fragments. Mold may also produce substances that can cause or worsen health problems, and these substances vary depending on the mold species and on conditions related to the indoor environment. Moisture can also attract cockroaches, rodents, and dust mites. Moisture-damaged building materials can release volatile organic compounds that can cause health problems.

Researchers have not found exactly how much exposure to dampness-related substances it takes to cause health problems. Research studies report that finding and correcting sources of dampness is a more effective way to prevent health problems than counting indoor microbes. Therefore, NIOSH developed a tool to help assess areas of dampness in buildings and to help prioritize remediation of problems areas.

NOTE: NIOSH uses the term "mold" to refer to fungi in the indoor environment, which can include multicellular fungi that produce hyphae, unicellular yeasts, and in some excessively damp environments, mushroom producing basidiomycetes.

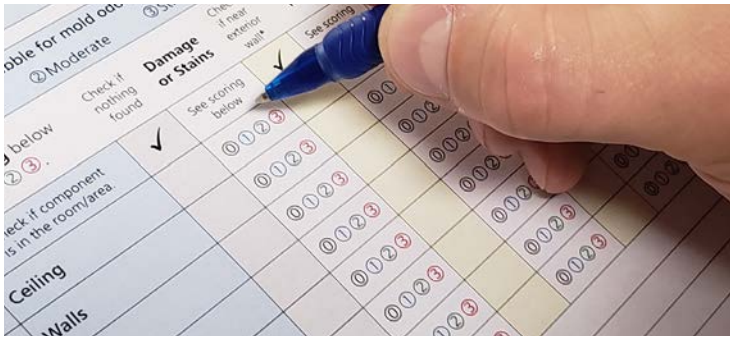

Photo by NIOSH

Dampness and Mold Assessment Tool

General Buildings Form
Use one form per area being assessed.

General Information

Date:
Observer:
Building:
Floor:
Room/Area Identification:

Room/Area Type: Describe below the type of room/area you are assessing.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Mold Odor: Fill in the bubble for mold odor. Be sure to smell for mold odor when you first walk into the room/area.

⓪None ①Mild ②Moderate ③Strong Describe source of mold odor: ○Source Unknown

	See **scoring** below for ⓪①②③.	Check if nothing found	**Damage or Stains**	Check if near exterior wall*	**Visible Mold**	Check if near exterior wall*	**Wet or Damp**	Check if near exterior wall*	**Component Notes**	**Assessment Notes**
✓	Check if component is in the room/area.	✓	See scoring below	✓	See scoring below	✓	See scoring below	✓	Fill in the bubbles for the type of material that is affected.	Fill in the bubbles for additional detail. Describe if "Other"
✓	**Ceiling**		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Ceiling tile ○Plaster ○Concrete ○Sheet rock ○Metal ○Wood	○Peeling paint ○Rust Other:
✓	**Walls**		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Sheet rock ○Plaster ○Concrete ○Block ○Brick ○Tile ○Wood	○Peeling paint ○Efflorescence Other:
✓	**Floor**		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Wood ○Carpet ○Vinyl ○Ceramic ○Concrete	○Buckling Other:
	Windows		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Exterior ○Interior ○Skylight	○Peeling paint ○Condensation Other:
	Furnishings		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Furniture ○Mechanical ○Sink ○Toilet ○Copier	○Peeling paint ○Rust Other:
	HVAC systems		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Radiator ○Forced-air ○Fan ○Unit ventilator ○Windowunit	○Peeling paint ○Rust Other:
	Supplies & Materials		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Books ○Boxes ○Equipment	○Wrinkled pages ○Crumpled boxes Other:
	Pipes		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		○Plumbing ○Gas	○Peeling paint ○Rust Other:

General Notes

_____

_____

_____

* Within 3 feet of exterior wall.

Scoring: ⓪= none ①< or = the size of a sheet of paper ②> than a sheet of paper to the size of a standard door ③> than the size of a standard door

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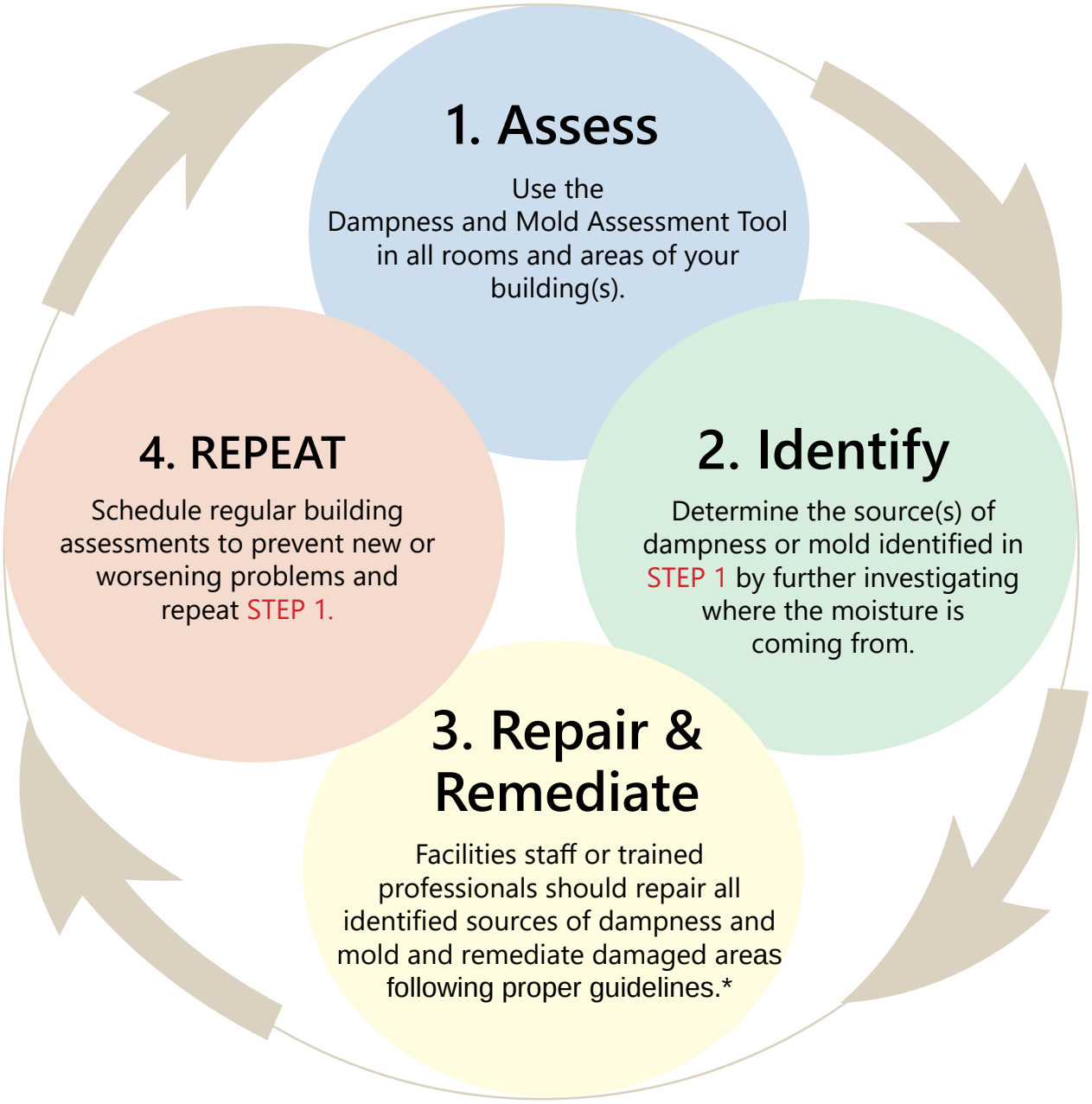
Assessment Cycle



*Mold Remediation in School and Commercial Buildings—Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
www.epa.gov/mold/mold-remediation-schools-and-commercial-buildings-guide

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About the Form

NOTICE TO USERS

Building assessments using the Dampness and Mold Assessment Tool will likely be done in areas that may pose health problems for some people. Use caution if you have asthma, allergies, or are having current respiratory health symptoms.

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Using the Form

1) General Information

Complete the top of the form by entering the following information.

Date: Month, day, and year of the assessment.
Observer: Name of the person that is performing the assessment.
Building: Unique reference of the building (such as main, annex, portable).
Floor: Floor number or level.
Room/Area Identification: Room number or title.

Example:

General Information

Date: *8/20/2017*
Observer: *Jon Snow*
Building: *Whitehall Administration*
Floor: *2*
Room/Area Identification: *2027*

2) Room/Area Type

Describe the room or area you are assessing.

NOTE: It is important to keep room/area titles standardized. For example, rooms with more than one title (e.g., bathroom, washroom, men's & women's facilities) should be referred to as the same title each time an assessment is conducted. This will help with data consistency.

Example:

Room/Area Type: Describe below the type of room/area you are assessing.

Room 2027 is the office directly across from the staff kitchen on the second floor.

3) Mold Odor

If you detect a mold odor, assess it. Be sure to smell for mold odor when you first walk into each room. Determine subjectively whether a smell is mild, moderate, or strong, and identify the odor's source.

Example:

⓪None ①Mild ●Moderate ③Strong Describe source of mold odor: *flooring* ○Source Unknown

If you cannot determine the source, fill in the Source Unknown bubble.

4) Room Components

Place a check (✓) in the first (blue) column for all of the room components found in the room you are assessing. Because all areas must have a ceiling, walls, and a floor, those components are automatically checked. Assess components systematically in the order given from top to bottom.

Example:

Automatically checked

✓	Check if component is in the room/area.
✓	Ceiling
✓	Walls
✓	Floor
	Windows
✓	Furnishings
✓	HVAC systems
✓	Supplies & Materials
	Pipes

- *Windows* includes internal, external, and skylights.
- *Furnishings* includes furniture, sinks, toilets, printers and copiers.
- *HVAC systems* includes all systems used to heat/cool the room or area including unit ventilators, radiators, forced-air systems, window units, and fans.
- *Supplies & Materials* includes books, paper, boxes, gym equipment, kitchen supplies.
- *Pipes* includes any exposed pipes in the room.

5) Nothing Found

Look closely at all components identified in the room for any damage, mold, or wetness. Place a check (✓) in the third (gray) column for all of the room components where no issues are identified.

Example:

	Check if component is in the room/area.	Check if nothing found
✓		✓
✓	Ceiling	
✓	Walls	
✓	Floor	✓
	Windows	
✓	Furnishings	✓
✓	HVAC systems	
✓	Supplies & Materials	✓
	Pipes	

In this example, no damage, mold, or wetness was found on the floor, the furnishings, or supplies & materials.

6) Assessing Damage and Scoring

Assessing Damage

Use the three different columns of damage types for the assessment.

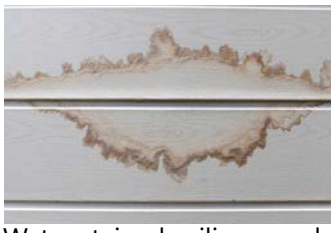
1) Damage or Stains

This refers to any water-related damage or stains identified per component.

- Damage could include peeling paint, efflorescence, rust, warping, and deteriorated or crumbling building materials.

Damage to wall caused by flooding.

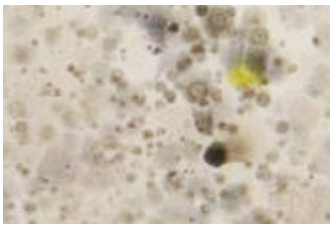
- Stains could include discoloration caused by possible water leaks, flooding or condensation.


Water stained ceiling panels.

2) Visible Mold

Note if you see visible mold growth or suspect mold growth.

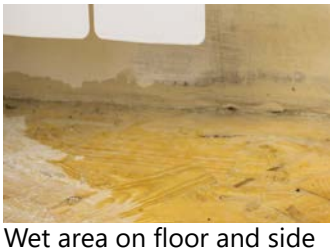
- Mold can include patches or spots that are colored differently than the underlying material (typically gray, brown, or black). Mold can appear fuzzy and can have a musty or earthy odor.


Mold on a wall.

3) Wet or Damp

Note any areas of wetness or dampness that are visible.

- Wet or damp conditions could include visible signs of moisture, such as water beads or condensation, humidity, water leaks, or flooding.


Wet area on floor and side of wall.

Scoring

Scoring is based on the size of all affected areas combined. Individual sizes of each affected area are added together to obtain a combined size. Scoring examples are provided in the Appendix (pages 11–13).

⓪ = No problem areas identified.

① = The combined area of damage is the size of a standard sheet of paper (8½ inches X 11 inches) or smaller.

② = The combined area of damage is greater than the size of a standard sheet of paper (8 1/2" x 11") and less than the size of a standard interior door (32" x 80").

③ = The combined area of damage is greater than the size of a standard interior door (32" x 80").

Interior door

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Score each component by filling in the appropriate assessment score in the Damage or Stains, Visible Mold, or Wet and Damp columns. If the affected area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall, place a check (✓) in the yellow column after each scoring column.

Example:

Damage or Stains	Check if near exterior wall*	**Visible Mold**	Check if near exterior wall*	**Wet or Damp**	Check if near exterior wall*
See scoring below	✓	See scoring below	✓	See scoring below	✓
⓪ ● ② ③		⓪ ① ● ③	✓	● ① ② ③	

These evaluations are subjective, so you should try to be consistent in the way you observe the conditions and then score each assessment.

A score of 3 for Damage or Stains, Visible Mold, or Wet or Damp should trigger immediate attention to identify problem sources and to remediate. Likewise, a score of 3 for Mold Odor should trigger attention to identify areas of hidden mold. Scores should also be used for comparison of rooms/areas over time to see if remediation works or if problems get worse.

7) Component & Assessment Notes

This section collects more information that you observe for each of the room components:

- "Component Notes" includes information on the material or location affected.
- "Assessment Notes" includes information on common indicators of dampness.

Fill in the bubble(s) that most accurately apply to your observational assessment.

Example:

Component Notes	**Assessment Notes**
Fill in the bubbles for the type of material that is affected.	Fill in the bubbles for additional detail. Describe if "Other"
●Ceiling tile ○Plaster ○Concrete ○Sheet rock ○Metal ○Wood	●Peeling paint ○Rust Other:
○Sheet rock ●Plaster ○Concrete ○Block ○Brick ○Tile ○Wood	○Peeling paint ○Efflorescence Other: *rt corner crumbling*

Scoring Example 1

In this assessment, these two stains are the only problem areas identified on this room's ceiling. Therefore, combine the size of **both** stained areas to determine a score.

Damage or Stains

The stains on these ceiling tiles are very visible. A score for this would be a **2** because both stains combined are bigger than the size of a standard sheet of paper but smaller than an interior door.

Both stains are not within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

Visible Mold

There does not appear to be any mold growth on these two stains at this point. The visible mold score would be **0**.

Both stains are not within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

Wet or Damp

Both areas were formed after a recent rain and appear wet. Together, they are larger than the size of a standard sheet of paper but smaller that the size of an interior door. This example would have a score of **2**.

Both stains are not within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

			Damage or Stains	Check if near exterior wall*	**Visible Mold**	Check if near exterior wall*	**Wet or Damp**	Check if near exterior wall*
✓	Ceiling		0 1 **2** 3		**2** 1 2 3		0 1 **2** 3	

Scoring Example 2

Damage in this area is severe and includes two wall sections that meet at the corner. Determine scores based on the combined size of this entire area.

Damage or Stains

The damage to this wall is extensive, and the area is larger than the size of an interior door. Therefore, the score should be a **3**.

This area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

Visible Mold

The visible mold on this damaged wall area is larger than the size of an interior door, so the score should be a **3**.

This area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

Wet or Damp

The damage to this wall is very discolored and likely wet.The size of the dampness is larger than an interior door, so the score should be a **3**.

This area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

			Damage or Stains	Check if near exterior wall*	**Visible Mold**	Check if near exterior wall*	**Wet or Damp**	Check if near exterior wall*
✓	Walls		⓪①②●	✓	⓪①②●	✓	⓪①②●	✓

Note this damage in the "General Notes" section of the form for immediate attention.

Scoring Example 3

This entryway carpet is visibly saturated along the edges. Therefore, combine the size of the wet edges for scoring.

Damage or Stains

This entryway appears extremely wet. The size of the sides combined are larger than a sheet of paper, but smaller than an interior door, so the score would be a **2**.

This area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

Visible Mold

The carpet does not seem to have any visible mold. The score would be a **0**.

This area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

Wet or Damp

As with the Damage and Stains score, this extremely wet carpet is larger than a sheet of paper, but smaller than an interior door, so the score would be a **2**.

This area is within 3 feet of an exterior wall.

			Damage or Stains	Check if near exterior wall*	Visible Mold	Check if near exterior wall*	Wet or Damp	Check if near exterior wall*
✓	Floor		⓪ ① ● ③	✓	● ① ② ③	✓	⓪ ① ● ③	✓

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Special Notes

Is it a stain or is it mold?

Many times this is difficult to determine. If you are not certain what you see is mold:

1) Score as **0** in the **Visible Mold** column.
2) Write a note in the **General Notes** section of the form for further evaluation.

	Pipes		⓪①②③		⓪①②③		⓪①②③	

General Notes *Not sure if mold or something else?*

Photographs can be useful for documenting conditions. You may consider taking a photograph of an area that seems severe and referring to the photograph in the **General Notes** section of the form.

Questions? Contact NIOSHBreathe@cdc.gov.