

-- Mold --

Consideration of New Lease/Rental Policy: Some condos are addressing new requirements whereby leases and rental agreements will no longer be approved, unless they include a **MOLD ADDENDUM**, that clearly stipulates the role/responsibility of the tenant in monitoring and mitigating mold/mildew while leasing/renting the property. They believe it's time to remind owners, especially those who lease/rent their units to non-Floridians, that our humidity levels require special attention.

MOLD - A VISUAL TOUR OF SOME PAST PROBLEMS IN RENTAL UNITS & GUIDELINES ON PREVENTION

Photo 1



For the Record - The two condo units shown did not experience an external water intrusion.

These photographs merely record what happens under lifestyle patterns that contribute to the development and expansion of mold. **Remember, YOU** are the first line of defense! Don't let the problem escalate, and then call the Association to address it. By then, it's too late. If you see mold growth, take photographs and start cleaning. See the **list below** the photographs for an action plan.

The situation depicted in photographs above and below from two different condo units were eventually corrected by professional cleaning/treatment, and subsequent control of unit humidity, air flow, and a more aggressive regular cleaning program, especially behind furniture and other areas that do not get good air circulation nor much light.

The problem appears to be more prevalent in ground-floor units, where greater coolness often dictates less air conditioning use, but with the unintended consequence of failing to remove humidity from the air.

Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5 - Below, mold is growing on the bottom of the doors.



Photo 6 - Again - different angle of the doors in the middle of the unit.



MOLD AND LIFE IN FLORIDA:

Control humidity/water and keep surfaces clean, and you will control mold growth

The problem of mold has been identified as a major issue for several years, especially with respect to insurance coverage, or lack thereof. Insurance companies now normally exclude coverage. That is certainly the case for association insurance coverage, and unless specifically requested for homeowner's coverage, it more than likely is excluded, or severely limited. Nevertheless, mold is very much of part of Florida living.

Below you will find a fairly comprehensive list of "**do's**," "**don't's**" and "**preventive steps**." The information was culled from a "**Mold Addendum to Lease**," which *ERA Showcase* currently uses for the units it manages. Additional information was culled from information from Space Coast Condominium Association meetings, as well as from our own experiences.

As it turns out, with the exception of the rare "*incident*," where water intrusion is an identified source of moisture and humidity, mold is most often an issue of lifestyle and behavior not suited to our Florida climate. Avoiding mold is best achieved by controlling moisture, and attention to details is a key factor.

Mold consists of naturally occurring microscopic organisms, which reproduce by spores. Mold breaks down and feeds on organic matter in the environment. The mold spores spread through the air and the combination of excessive moisture and organic matter allows for mold to grow. In our Florida climate, controlling moisture is a major challenge.

The best approach is to use air-conditioning as much as possible and consider extended operation to pull moisture from the air, rather than short bursts merely to cool down an area. Whenever appropriate ventilate periodically by opening windows to allow circulation of fresh air during dry weather only. Because of the proximity to the ocean, rivers and lakes/retention ponds, being sensitive to wind velocity/ direction and mist or spray is an important consideration even in dry weather.

Remember, you are the first line of defense against mold. If a mold has occurred on a small non-porous surface, such as ceramic tile, Formica, vinyl flooring, metal, or plastic and the mold is not due to an ongoing leak or moisture problem, clean the areas with soap (or detergent) and a small amount of water. Let the surface dry and then within 24 hours apply a non staining cleaner such as Lysol Disinfectant, Pine-Sol Disinfectant (original pine-scented), Tilex Mildew Remover, or Clorox Cleanup.

Immediately below is a list of mold mitigating steps, and below that is a second list of what you might require an occupant (not familiar with Florida living), or a tenant to report.

If you lease your property you should require a specific "**Mold Addendum To Lease**" to protect your property. You can also check your own performance on this list. The below is from the **ERA Showcase Lease Addendum**:

- * () Keep the premises clean and regularly dust, vacuum and mop;
- * () Use hood vents when cooking, cleaning, and dishwashing;
- * () Keep closet doors ajar;
- * () Avoid excessive amounts of indoor plants;
- * () Use exhaust fans when bathing/showering, & leave on for a sufficient amount of time to remove moisture;
- * () Use ceiling fans if present;

- * () Water all indoor plants outdoors;
- * () Wipe down any moisture and/or spillage;
- * () Wipe down bathroom walls and fixtures after bathing/showering;
- * () Wipe down any vanities/sink tops;
- * () Avoid air-drying dishes;
- * () Do not "hang-dry" clothes indoors;
- * () Open blinds/curtains to allow light into premises;
- * () Wipe down floors if any water spillage;
- * () Hang shower curtains inside bathtub when showering;
- * () Securely close shower doors if present;
- * () Leave bathroom and shower doors open after use;
- * () Use dryer if present for wet towels;
- * () Use household cleaners on any hard surfaces;
- * () Remove any moldy or rotten food;
- * () Remove garbage regularly;
- * () Wipe down any and all visible moisture;
- * () Wipe down windows and sills if moisture present;
- * () Inspect for leaks under sinks;
- * () Check all washer hoses if applicable; and
- * () Regularly empty de-humidifier, if used.

If you lease, or have guest occupancy, have guests or tenants **report** (in writing and with digital photograph):

- * () Visible or suspected mold;
- * () All A/C or heating problems or spillage;
- * () Plant watering overflows;
- * () Musty odors, shower/bath/sink overflows; leaky faucets;
- * () Plumbing, pet urine accidents;
- * () Discoloration of walls, baseboards, doors, window frames, ceilings;
- * () Moldy clothing, refrigerator and A/C drip pan overflow;
- * () Moisture dripping from or around any vents, A/C condenser lines;
- * () Loose, missing or failing grout or caulk around tubs, showers, sinks, faucets, countertops
- * () Clothes dryer vent leaks, and any and all moisture

After reading the list, most of us will conclude that it states the obvious and that it verbalizes what should be common sense. Nevertheless, we have had a number of instances where mold has nearly overtaken an entire unit and the most apparent reason was negligence in being attentive to just a few of the above-mentioned items on the lists.