



February 7, 2025

DAL: DACF 25-15
Subject: Mitigating Risks of Water
Damage and Mold Growth

Dear Adult Care Facility Administrator:

Mold can grow almost anywhere there is moisture, and mold spores are everywhere, so the key to prevention is to identify and control moisture and water problems. This correspondence provides Adult Care Facilities with guidance for recognizing the signs of water damage, the risks of mold growth resulting from such damage, and the expectations to be followed if water damage is evident.

Common sources of moisture include, but are not limited to, roof leaks, indoor plumbing leaks, outdoor drainage problems, unvented steam from a bathroom or kitchen, condensation, and poor ventilation. Routinely checking vulnerable areas and communicating with facilities staff can reduce repair costs, prevent structural damage and eliminate health hazards. Inspect for water damage in areas such as basements, bathrooms, shower rooms, laundry areas, or behind appliances. Take note of odors and visible evidence like discoloration on walls, ceilings, or flooring, which may appear as yellow, brown, or dark spots. Pay particular attention to bubbling or peeling paint or wallpaper, as these can indicate underlying moisture issues; and a musty odor is a strong indicator of hidden dampness or mold growth. Use a gloved hand to feel for soft or spongy spots, particularly around pipes, under sinks, or near washing machines. If possible, inspect these areas with a flashlight to identify hidden water stains or mold growth.

In all situations, the underlying moisture problem must be corrected to prevent mold growth and regrowth. An immediate response and thorough cleaning, drying, and/or removal of water-damaged materials will prevent or limit growth. However, appropriate building experts may need to be consulted to identify and recommend ventilation, plumbing and carpentry repairs where warranted.

Due to the relationship between potential serious infections and mold exposure, as well as the expectation of a safe and homelike environment for residents of Adult Care Facilities, the Department enforces the requirements of Title 18 of New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, Section 487.11(k). Specifically, when a recertification survey and/or complaint investigation finds evidence of water damage or possible evidence of mold growth, the Department will direct action to address, as applicable, stained ceiling tiles and peeling paint, and depending on the extent of the damage, the Department will require that the facility hire a contractor to make necessary repairs.

Maintaining open communication and implementing a routine monitoring strategy are essential to reducing the risk of leaks and moisture damage. Regularly inspecting vulnerable areas, promptly addressing repairs, and encouraging residents and staff to report potential issues

can help prevent water damage from escalating and protect residents from serious mold-related infections. Proactively managing moisture reduces the likelihood of mold growth, safeguarding both the health of residents and staff and the structural integrity of the facility's physical plant. Awareness and vigilance will create a safer, healthier environment for everyone.

The Department makes available information about mold at <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/7287/>. If you have questions about the content of this correspondence, please contact the Division of Adult Care Facility and Assisted Living Surveillance via email to acinfo@health.ny.gov. Thank you for your partnership in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Ann Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

KellyAnn Anderson, Director
Division of Adult Care Facility
and Assisted Living Surveillance

cc: Dr. Fish
V. Deetz
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