Moisture Control is Key to Mold Control

Excessive mold growth in a residence can lead to more than just unsightly stains. It can damage your property and possibly aggravate health problems, especially for those with allergies or weak/suppressed immune systems.

Don’t turn off that AC! You’re laying trowel for a few weeks, so turn the AC off and save some money. Right in warm and humid environments, the AC does more than cool things down, it dries humidity. If humid Proventil is critical. Turn it up, but not off, and keep the fan on at all times. Mold does not like dry air or that “chilly.” The relative humidity in your home should be between 30% and 50% at all times.

Check your washing machine hoses. Every day there are bloomed, cracked, leaking machine hoses that fall and flood homes. Replace them if they are not leaky or broken.

Replace that worn out water heater. There are valves for flooding the interior of homes when a little rain on the side gets into a big lake. Replace it now if it is showing signs of deterioration. A chain out will help properly dispose of any water from a leaking water heater.

Open the blinds. Mold lives dark, damp areas. Open the blinds and expose all of your rooms to sunlight periodically.

Keep all clothing away. A common mistake is to toss wet clothes in a hamper. As they dry, the moisture can be drawn off, and mold may grow fast in the hamper.

Clean up and kill the mold. When it seems to grow, hire the mold remediation service. Consult the EPA Mold Remediation guidelines.

Round up after wind damage. If your home suffers wind or other external damage with a storm, board it up promptly, especially during the rainy season. There are many no-interest games that will help defend your home from additional damage.

Eliminate standing water. Adequate drainage outside of homes will help keep mold under control. Standing water can cause high levels inside and move from your home.

Moisture control is the key to mold control according to the EPA. The EPA recommends keeping your household relative humidity between 30% and 50%, and points out that you can monitor this with a moisture or humidity meter, a small, inexpensive ($10-$50) instrument available at many home improvement stores.

Disaster Safety Through Partnership

Academic Partners
International Code Council
Texas Tech Wind Science and Engineering Research Center

National Partners
American Society of Home Inspectors
FEMA
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Insurance Institute for Residential Home Safety
National Roofing Contractors Association
National Room Builder Association
National Weather Service

State Partners
Arkansas Department of Insurance
Florida Division of Financial Services
Florida Department of Community Affairs
Florida Department of Financial Services
Florida Division of Forestry
Florida Emergency Preparedness Association
Florida Farm Bureau
Florida Home Builders Association
Florida Home for Children
Florida Select
Georgia Department of Insurance
Georgia Emergency Management Agency
Kentucky Commerce Office
Kentucky Office of Insurance
Louisiana Office of Insurance
North Carolina Department of Insurance
Texas Department of Public Safety
Virginia Bureau of Insurance
West Virginia Insurance Commission

Community Partners
Brewer Propylene
Dixie Plumbing
Mami-Dade Emergency Management
Professional Builders Regional Planning Council
Tulsa Partners

Leadership Partners
Michael P. Kostal
Alaska Insurance Commissioner
Cheryl Green
Georgia Department of Insurance
West Virginia Insurance Commissioner
Tim Dye
Florida Chief Financial Officer
Alfred W. Green
Virginia Insurance Commissioner
Ann Long
North Carolina Commissioner
Jade Stevens
Estate Agent
Fred Lueth
Executive Director of Insurance
John W. Overby
Georgia Insurance & Accountable for Life
Mike Pickens
Arkansas Insurance Commissioner

Special Edition on Water

Special Edition on Water

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Smart VENT® and Flood VENT® Approved by FEMA and ICC

Foundations that are built below the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) are required to have vents that allow flood waters to flow through and under a building, relieving the hydrostatic pressure that would be exerted through and under a building, relieving the hydrostatic pressure which may be generated by flood waters that are exerted through and under a building, relieving the hydrostatic pressure which may be generated by flood waters that are exerted through and under a building.

Smart VENT® and Flood VENT® Automates: Foundation Flood Vents are FEMA approved and certified by the ICC Evaluation Service as an approved flood vent for foundation walls. The Smart VENT incorporates a patented flood control float system that unlashes a proven door during a flood event. Smart VENT was also designed with a patented temperature sensor allowing the louvers to automatically close when the temperature is cold and re-open as the temperature increases. All Smart VENT products are Certified as Engineered Openings. One 8-by-16-inch vent provides sufficient drainage capability for up to 200 square feet of enclosed area below the base Flood Elevation, meeting all applicable NFIP flood mitigation requirements.

Special Edition on Water

Blueprint for Safety News

Blueprint for Safety News hits the ground running. The latest in a series of outreach tools designed by FLASH, this quarterly newsletter updates readers on the latest in disaster mitigation and the home safety movement.

Blueprint for Safety News honors its name from the award-winning education program launched by FLASH nearly four years ago.

Blueprint for Safety began as a Florida initiative to promote disaster-resistant residential construction. It outlines best practices and features a “code-plus” curriculum for building industry professionals. Course curriculum and other educational materials were developed by a blue-ribbon panel of experts in the fields of construction, emergency management, engineering and insurance.

In this issue, the focus is water and the many ways it can damage a home whether in the form of mold, rain, wind-driven rain, rising flood waters or burst pipes and hoses. State Farm reports that frozen and burst pipes, alone, cause damage to an average of 250,000 homes annually. In many cases, this costly damage was preventable had homeowners applied a few affordable mitigation techniques. (See inside for details).

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I’m pleased to offer this new tool for raising mitigation awareness. Our hope is that you will find useful tips and techniques in each issue of Blueprint for Safety News whether you are a homeowner, homebuilder or home inspector. As with all of our tools, we strive to make this as user-friendly as possible by making Blueprint for Safety News available to you online at www.flash.org, as well as in print. Please let us know how we can improve the newsletter’s content or delivery. We are always open to new ideas and the feedback from our readers is so important. Please e-mail us at flash@flash.org or call us toll-free 1-877-221-SAFE.

www.flash.org
Floods are one of the most powerful, deadly and destructive natural disasters. Floods are also the costliest natural disaster - floods cause more than two billion dollars in damages annually.

Floods can be slow or fast rising - flash floods can occur with little or no warning and can reach full peak in only a few minutes.

Imagine this — the force of just six inches of swiftly moving water can knock people off their feet. Cars can be swept away in just two feet of moving water.*

Buildings can be swept off their foundations. Appliances, personal belongings and business inventory submerged and destroyed.

But there are a number of relatively inexpensive steps you can take that will protect your home and property before a flood strikes.

The base flood elevation (BFE) for any location is the height of water expected with a 100-year flood. To prevent floodwaters from entering your home, the lowest floor or lowest structural member (depending on the flood zone) must be elevated to or above the BFE.

If your home is constructed with foundation walls and is elevated to or above the BFE, the foundation walls must have flood vent openings to allow water to pass through and underlain your home and not allow hydrostatic forces on the home itself.

Homes located in a designated flood zone must comply with the minimum requirements mandated through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to get flood insurance.

Other measures that can be taken to protect your home from flood damage include elevating utilities to or above the BFE and installing a backflow preventer to prevent sewage backup during a flood.

Windows and Doors

In high wind events, windows and doors are susceptible to damage from wind-driven rain and debris. When windows and doors fail due to impacts from debris, the protective envelope of the building is breached, allowing wind and wind-driven rain to enter your home, potentially causing extensive damage to the contents and interior finishes.

The more critical aspect of losing a window or door in a hurricane is the potential for internal pressurization. When windows and doors fail, allowing wind to enter the building, the pressures on the walls and roofs will increase significantly, sometimes nearly double. Most homes are not designed for this significant increase in pressure, which can lead to a catastrophic failure.

To prevent either of these scenarios, protect windows and doors by covering them with hurricane shutters or installing impact resistant windows and doors. These devices are designed to resist the end on impact of a two-by-four traveling at 54 mph, and will significantly increase the survivability of you and your home in a hurricane.

Old and cracked caulking around windows and doors can allow rainwater to enter your home and potentially cause rotting of the structural supports. Inspect the caulking around windows and doors for cracking and deterioration. Replace and/or repair areas where needed.

Roofing products tested to these standards offer the best available protection from the damaging forces of high wind and hailstorms. Be sure to specify these standards and look for labels on the product packaging because wind- and impact-resistant roofing products do not look much different than untested products.

- Keep your roof, particularly valleys, clean and free of leaves, twigs, and other debris. Leaves and twigs can impair proper drainage from your roof and result in leaks and deterioration.
- Keep trees trimmed away from your roof to prevent branches from rubbing against the roof and potentially damaging the roof covering.

Gutters and Downspouts

Gutters and downspouts that are not maintained, installed, or sized correctly can create water problems in and around your home.

Gutters should be cleaned twice a year as part of your routine maintenance program.

Inside Your Home

- Hose connections
  - Check hose connections at the dishwasher, refrigerator, and washing machines regularly.
  - Replace washing machine hoses every three years or earlier if problems are found.

Water heaters

- Install water heaters on the lowest level of your home. NOTE: If your house is located in a designated flood zone, all appliances, including water heater, will have to be elevated above the Base Flood Elevation.

- If your water heater is installed above a finished space, make sure the water heater is installed in a drain path that discharges to an indirect waste receptor or directly to the outside of your home.

Caulking

- Check caulking around kitchen and bath sinks, and replace any damaged or deteriorated joints.
- Check caulking at joints in bathtubs and showers and replace any damaged or deteriorated joints.

Leak detection systems

- Consider having a leak detection system installed in your home for even greater protection. Some of these systems include:
  - Water alarms
  - Individual appliance systems
  - Whole house systems

Landscaping

Make sure that your yard slopes away from your home on all sides, so that water flows away from your home. Avoid installing lawn irrigation systems too close to your home. Consider the use of native plants to avoid the need for excessive watering.

Attic

Good attic cross ventilation is needed to prevent the buildup of moisture in the attic and to reduce the potential for ice dams on roofs in colder climates. Attic ventilation can be achieved through soffit vents, gable end vents, and ridge vents.

An ice dam can occur in climates where the temperature is consistently below freezing with snow. The process of freezing and thawing of snow on the roof can cause excessive build-up at the eave of the roof, ultimately creating an ice dam at the eave that won’t allow proper drainage.

When this condition occurs, water ponds behind the ice dam and backs up under the roof covering and can leak into the attic or along exterior walls. Good attic ventilation along with good insulation in the attic will help prevent the buildup of ice dams.

Good attic ventilation and insulated attic/roof