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## TAKE ACTION TO MINIMIZE MOLD AND DAMPNES AFTER TROPICAL STORM FRED



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**Panama City, Fla.**— As some Bay County residents deal with flooding in their homes and businesses from Tropical Storm Fred, the Florida Department of Health in Bay County (DOH-Bay) urges the public to take action to avoid indoor air quality problems. Moisture that enters buildings from leaks or flooding accelerates mold growth. Mold can cause disease, trigger allergic reactions, and continue to damage materials long after the storm. Failure to control moisture and mold can present short and long-term health risks.

“If not mitigated soon, water intrusion or flooding in homes or businesses can lead to mold growth.”, said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator and Health Officer DOH-Bay. “These recommendations will assist you in how to safely clean and prevent mold growth in your home or business.”

### TIPS TO CLEAN UP MOLD AND PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

- **Protect yourself:** Cleaning type gloves and safety goggles should be worn during cleaning.
- **Toss / Take it out:** Anything that was wet with flood water and can't be cleaned and dried completely within 24 to 48 hours should be taken outside. Take photos of discarded items for filing insurance claims.
- **Air out:** Open all doors and windows when you are removing wet or moldy materials or cleaning moldy surfaces.
- **Drying it out:** When electricity is safe to use, you can close doors/windows, turn on your air-conditioning and use fans and dehumidifiers to help remove moisture indoors. Remember that dehumidifiers can only dehumidify under closed indoor conditions. Dry your home and everything in it as quickly as possible – within 24 to 48 hours if you can.
- **Don't mix cleaners:** If you use cleaning products, do not mix cleaning products together because doing so can create toxic vapors. Always follow the manufactures instructions for use.
- **Scrub surfaces:** Clean with water and detergent. Remove all mold you can see. Dry right away.
- **Don't cover it, remove it:** Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent mold from growing. Fix the water problem completely, dry it out, and clean up all the mold before you paint or caulk.
- **Consider your medical status:** Individuals with suppressed or impaired immune systems, mold allergies, asthma, or other chronic lung disease should not clean or remove moldy materials. See your healthcare provider if you are unsure of your medical status or are not feeling well.

For more information about indoor air quality and mold growth, contact the DOH-Bay Environmental Health office at (850) 481-4812 or visit <https://www.floridahealth.gov/indoorair>. A handy guide for cleaning mold from flooded homes is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-cleanup-your-home>. Population-specific recommendations for protection from exposure to mold in flooded buildings by specific activity and risk factor is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: [https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/report/pdf/2005\\_moldtable5.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/mold/report/pdf/2005_moldtable5.pdf).



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