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# Press Release

# NEWS

*Burlington County*  
*Board of Chosen Freeholders*  
*Mount Holly, NJ 08060*  
*Office of Public Information*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS GUIDANCE ON MOLD CLEAN UP**

### **Flood Victims Urged To Check For Mold Growth**

Hurricane Irene is already a distant memory for most, but for those residents who were subjected to flooding, the Burlington County Health Department is urging they carefully inspect for mold and to take steps to eradicate it as quickly as possible.

“Mold can be a significant problem and proper cleanup is critical to ensure that it does not affect you or your family's health,” said Freeholder Mary Ann O'Brien. “This is of elevated importance to those homeowners who experienced flooding during Irene.”

To prevent or stop the growth of mold after a flood, all areas of a home that were wet in the floodwaters must be cleaned and completely dried. Mold can start to grow within 48 hours. Residents should discard all moldy carpeting and any porous materials such as books, clothing, bedding or furniture that already smells of mold or is visibly growing mold. The rule is: when in doubt, throw it out.

Once a house has a mold problem, all areas of the home must be checked, cleaned and dried including air ducts and basement crawl spaces. To prevent further mold growth, seal all leaks in roofs, walls or pipes that bring excess moisture into the house. Discard all moldy drywall, ceiling tiles and wet insulation. Keep receipts from the cleaning process since disaster assistance may be available to help with cleaning costs.

Burlington County Health Officer Robert Gogats said that health implications can be significant.

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## **PRESS RELEASE: Mold – 10/27/11 – Add One**

"People with asthma or pulmonary problems and those who are allergic to mold are especially vulnerable to mold-related illness," said Gogats. "It's important to clean and disinfect the contaminated area and remove the source of moisture. If this is not done, mold growth will recur."

Tips for cleaning mold:

- Identify and correct the moisture source. Then clean, disinfect and dry the moldy area. Keep the area well-ventilated and dispose of anything that has moldy residue, such as rags, paper, leaves or debris.
- Porous materials can trap molds. Items such as paper, rags, wallboard, ceiling tiles, sheetrock, carpeting and rotten wood should be thrown out.
- Wear protective gloves, such as rubber dishwashing gloves, when working with moldy materials.
- Carpeting can be a difficult problem. Drying does not remove the dead mold spores. If there is heavy mold on the carpet, the best course of action may be to throw it away. If the area was flooded, remove sheetrock to at least 12 inches above the high water mark. Allow the area to dry for two or three days before replacing damaged materials.
- Use non-ammonia soap or detergent, or a commercial cleaner in hot water. Scrub the entire affected area thoroughly using a stiff brush or cleaning pad, then rinse with clean water.

. Always open windows and doors while working with bleach to provide fresh air and wear non-porous gloves and protective eyewear during the cleaning process. Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners. Mixing bleach with other cleaning products will produce dangerous, toxic fumes so always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using cleaning products.

Damage to a home from flooding may be so extensive that it may seem easier to hire a contractor or cleaning service to help with flood damage cleanup. When hiring a contractor, use extra care in the hiring process and make sure they have experience cleaning up mold.

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**PRESS RELEASE: Mold – 10/27/11 – Add Two**

Whenever possible, deal with trained and experienced professionals in your own community. These are business people with a local reputation to protect and can be held accountable for their work. Avoid offers that seem too good to be true. The county does not endorse specific contracting companies.

For more information on mold and mold cleanup, the Environmental Protection Agency provides a comprehensive description on the dangers of mold and how to clean and disinfect a mold-damaged home on its web page. Mold resources are available at [www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html](http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html) or [http://www.nj.gov/health/iep/mold\\_links.shtml](http://www.nj.gov/health/iep/mold_links.shtml).

The Burlington County Health Department – Environmental Section may be reached at 606-265-5515

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