

The Methods of Mold Testing

Visual Inspection

Visual Inspection is the most common form of mold testing. Titanium Laboratories begins each mold inspection with a thorough visual inspection. We look for signs of moisture, water damage, possible leaks, water intrusion; we measure the humidity and the temperature, among the collection of various other data involved with mold testing. All of which provides important clues to resolve a mold testing issue. Throughout this phase of mold testing an inspector is on the lookout for three things, evidence of previous moisture intrusion, evidence of mold growth and areas with a potential for future mold infestation. This type of mold testing typically covers the interior living space, basement, attic and crawl space. Exterior surfaces are examined for evidence of water damage / intrusion and potential for future problem areas.

Surface Sampling

Surface / Bulk sampling is used to identify a mold type at a specific location. This mold testing technique is useful also in ruling out possible discolorations or staining that sometimes exhibit mold like characteristics.

Swab

A cotton swab is used to collect a small quantity of material from a non-porous surface. The area where mold is suspected is gently swabbed. After the entire area has been sampled, the swab is inserted into the tube of a buffer and shipped to the laboratory within 24 hours of the mold testing. In turn the sample is analyzed either with a fungi screen or culture analysis. An accredited laboratory performs the testing procedures for these results.

Bulk

A bulk sample should be collected when material is porous and swabbing is not practical. A utility knife with a clean blade is used to collect a desired 25-50 grams of sample, if available. Bulk materials are then placed into a standard zip-lock type bag and sent to an accredited laboratory to be analyzed with either a fungi screen or culture analysis.

Tape

A piece of clear tape is used to collect a small quantity of material. In turn this is analyzed either with a fungi screen or culture analysis. An accredited laboratory performs the testing procedures for these results.

Air Sampling

In mold testing, air sampling is the most effective method for determining whether a mold infestation is potentially creating an unsafe living environment. Our mold testing procedure incorporates the Air-O-Cell cassette and/or the use of (MEA) Malt Extract Augur media, depending on your unique situation.

Air-O-Cell

During this type of mold testing, air quality is tested using the Air-O-Cell cassette by drawing 15 cubic liters of air per min and impacting the airborne particles over a glass substrate. Typically the process runs from 3 to 5 minutes, producing a sample size of 45 to 75 cubic liters.

MEA

In this form of mold testing, air quality is tested using the Malt Extract Augur (MEA) by drawing 28.3 liters of air per min. and impacting the airborne particles over a glass substrate. Typically the process runs from 3 to 5 minutes, producing a sample size of 84.9 to 141.5 cubic liters. Next, the cassette is sent to an accredited laboratory, where the spores are identified and counted.

These numbers alone do not give us enough information to accurately determine the level of contamination. Outside control samples are needed to identify the quantity of mold found in the natural environment. Indoor levels are normally found at approximately 50% of outside samples.

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