

Best Practices to Prevent Mold

Our facility mechanical systems are designed to bring in a significant amount of outside air in fully occupied buildings. Caution needs to be used when operating these systems during the summer, especially if the building is not fully occupied. When air conditioning systems are left to run during the summer in unoccupied spaces, hot humid air will enter the building resulting in condensation and potential mold growth. Aside from setting air-conditioning systems to “unoccupied mode” where necessary, the following actions will minimize the potential for mold growth during the summer:

- **Keep all windows and all outside doors closed** to prevent humid air from entering conditioned spaces.
- Your building service staff must inspect the entire building every week for moisture accumulation, musty odors, or mold. It is particularly important to routinely check lower level areas, underneath cafeteria tables, instrument storage rooms and relocatable buildings. If any of these conditions are found, appropriate action must be taken to address these issues as soon as possible. Report any recurring moisture, musty odors, or mold problems that you cannot eliminate to the Indoor Air Quality Unit at 240-740-2520.
- Where air conditioning is used, have building services set the fan to the lowest speed, if possible. This improves dehumidification, making the space more comfortable by keeping the cooling coil valves open for longer periods of time.
- Do not lower thermostat settings below 76 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Do not operate air conditioning equipment in unoccupied areas of the building. If you need help isolating the air conditioning system for occupied portions of the building, contact the DFM Call Center at (240) 740-2300.
- Keep exhaust fans turned off in unoccupied areas, especially the kitchen and large assembly areas. This reduces the amount of humid outside air drawn into the building.
- Make sure dehumidifiers are turned on and draining properly. Unit filters should be cleaned and rinsed on a regular basis.
- Use portable floor fans and dehumidifiers during floor cleaning/stripping projects to facilitate evaporation and reduce humidity levels.
- In the event of a flood or discovery of widespread mold, report the problem immediately to the DFM Call Center at (240) 740-2300.