



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR STRUCTURAL PEST INSPECTORS

Mold Reporting Requirements

Recently, growth of mold in buildings has become the focus of a major public health debate. Molds are naturally occurring microorganisms that exist in a wide range of environments. Numerous species have been identified. All types of mold require three things to develop – moisture, nutrients, and a suitable place to grow. Typically, mold utilizes spores to reproduce and these can be found nearly everywhere. Mold may even develop indoors on wood, paper, or drywall – wherever suitable moisture is present.

What responsibility do you, as a licensed Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) structural pest inspector, have to report mold during a wood destroying organism (WDO) inspection? Washington State law requires that you report the presence of, and damage by, WDOs. Mold, according to authorities such as Dr. Jeff Morrell, Oregon State University Professor of Forest Products, is not a WDO but rather, a wood inhabiting organism that does not cause structural damage. Reporting on the presence of organisms other than WDOs is not required.

However, structural pest inspectors must also report the conducive conditions leading to WDO development. Moreover, conditions such as excessive moisture from plumbing leaks, lack of ventilation, or poor drainage, may result in the development of mold. The WSDA only requires that you report conducive conditions that are present.

The rules governing structural pest inspections, found in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 16-228-2005 through WAC 16-228-2060, are minimum guidelines for inspectors to follow. Additional observations or recommendations, including reporting on the presence or absence of mold, are left to the discretion of the inspector. If you are not confident in your ability to report on mold in buildings, leave those assessments to a specialist who is trained in this subject.

Additional information about mold is available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the following website:

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html>

Questions on licensing and reporting requirements for structural pest inspectors can be directed to the WSDA at 877.301.4555.

March, 2003