

Mold Response Instructions (for a minor outbreak)

In the event of a minor mold outbreak on a few isolated items:

- **Contact your disaster recovery team leader (see your disaster plan), and obtain appropriate supplies from the disaster supply kit.** This should include protective gear such as gloves and respirators. Remember that OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard 29 CFR 1910.134 must be followed in the workplace.
- **Find out what is causing the mold growth.** Look for a source of moisture (e.g., roof leak, leaky pipe, broken window, basement water seepage) and correct it if one is found.
- **Modify the environment.** Measure the relative humidity in the immediate area. Reduce the humidity using dehumidifiers if needed.
- **Determine whether or not the affected items must be retained.** Can they be discarded, replaced, photocopied, or microfilmed?
- **If the affected items must be recovered, isolate them and dry or freeze those that are wet.** For freezing, place items in freezer bags before putting them in a freezer. For drying, locate an isolated area where the materials could be air dried. This area should be cool and dry, but should not share a ventilation system with the rest of the building to avoid spreading spores. Move items to be air dried to the isolation area in polyethylene bags, but do not leave the items in the bags after moving them. Use care when handling items, to prevent spreading spores and contaminating other objects.
- **Air dry the items** using general methods for drying wet books, but DO NOT use fans in the drying area.
- **Once items are dry, remove the mold carefully, using a HEPA vacuum.** A small number of items can be cleaned in-house, but only if appropriate personal protective equipment, including a fit-tested respirator, is worn by the person(s) doing the cleaning. Do not use a wet/dry vacuum, as these can exhaust mold particles into the air.
- **Clean and dry the affected shelving area(s) thoroughly.** Persons doing this work should also be protected with proper safety equipment. After removing all collections from the shelves, vacuum with a HEPA vacuum and wipe all surfaces with detergent solution or a commercial cleaning product such as bleach, if necessary. Be careful not to mix bleach and ammonia products, as this creates a toxic gas. Do not return materials to the area until all shelves are completely dry.
- **Check materials periodically (at least monthly) for evidence of new or recurrent growth.** Carry out these inspections for one year following the infestation.