- **Make sure companies are registered to do business in New York State.** Even if you are not using a licensed home improvement contractor, the business must still be registered with the New York State Secretary of State.

  New York State Secretary of State
  (518) 473-2492 or www.dos.ny.gov/corps/bus_entity_search.html

- **Get proof of insurance from your contractor.** If a worker is injured, or damage is caused on your property, you could be held liable if your contractor does not have the required insurance.

- **Find out if there have been any complaints** lodged against the contractor or business by contacting all of the agencies listed above. In addition you can contact the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org

- **Obtain a written contract for all work to be done** and costs to be incurred. New York state law requires a "home improvement contractor" to provide a written contract for home improvement work specifying the scope of the work to be performed, the cost, a notice that the consumer may cancel the contract within three business days as well as other mandatory disclosures.

- **Get references and check them.** Ask friends and neighbors. Get references from the contractor and speak directly to former customers. Check for complaints with the Better Business Bureau.

- **Ask for all Material Safety Data Sheets.** These will give you important information about any chemicals they plan to use.

New York State Attorney General
The State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224
1-800-771-7755
www.ag.ny.gov

RESOURCES

New York State Office of the Attorney General
www.ag.ny.gov
http://www.nyknowyourcontractor.com/cfmqstaticdocs/home_improvement.html
800-771-7755

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
"A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home"
http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/
888- 283 -7626

New York State Department of Health
"Information about Mold"
www.health.ny.gov/publications/7287.pdf
800-458-1158 (ext. 27800) or 518 402-7800

NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
Report: "Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments"
Fact Sheet: "Facts about Mold"
http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/epi/mold.shtml
212-442-3372 or 212-788-4290

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health
Fact Sheets: "Facts about Mold and Dampness", "Protect Yourself from Mold", "Get Rid of Mold"
800 -232-4636 http://www.cdc.gov/mold

Cornell University College of Human Ecology
"Hiring a Mold Remediation Contractor"
http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/EDEN/Mold-remediation.pdf

American Industrial Hygiene Association
'"The Facts about Mold"
http://222.aiha.org

Hands On Network
"The Effectiveness of Mold Treatments on the Post Katrina Gulf Coast"
http://bonaresponds.blogspot.com/2011/09/post-irene-mold-remediation-resources.html

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE
of the
ATTORNEY GENERAL

MOLD IN YOUR HOME?

Tips for cleaning up after a flood

Environmental Protection Bureau

Health Concerns About Mold

Mold grows where there is moisture. In the aftermath of storms or floods, materials that are wet for more than 48 hours will have visible and extensive mold growth and should be remediated.

For the majority of people, small amounts of undisturbed mold are not a major health hazard. There are no regulatory limits for exposure to indoor mold but there is evidence that widespread mold (and mold spores) can have harmful effects. Those most at risk include: infants and children, elderly people, pregnant women, and individuals with respiratory conditions, allergies (including asthma), or weakened immune systems. Mold abatement workers are also at higher risk. A well planned remediation is key to addressing these concerns.

Removing Mold

It is important to consider whether to attempt your own mold remediation or hire a mold abatement expert. Here are some of the factors to evaluate.

First, minimize your exposure to mold by isolating the impacted area , if possible. This can be done by sealing off doorways with plastic and covering other openings and air ducts.

Clean It or Throw It Away?

- Non-Porous surfaces, such as metals, glass, and hard plastics, can usually be cleaned.
- Semi-porous and porous structural materials, such as wood and concrete, can usually be cleaned if they are structurally sound.
- Porous materials, such as ceiling tiles, insulation, and wallboards with extensive mold should be discarded. Some experts say that you should discard porous materials with more than 10 square feet of mold while others say that you need to discard the materials only if there is more than 100 square feet of mold. If wallboard is removed, be sure to go at least six inches beyond visible mold.

Commonly Used Cleaning Methods

There are no industry standards or consensus about any particular method to clean mold. Most frequently, it is recommended that the mold be removed by grinding and scraping with a stiff brush, then vacuuming with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum, followed by one of the following:

- Wiping with a detergent solution;
- Wiping with a bleach solution;
- Sealing with a borate solution (requires certified pesticide applicator);
- Sealing with another type of primer, such as a latex paint.

With All Methods, Follow These Guidelines

Use the gentlest cleaning method that effectively removes the mold. A large percentage of mold can be removed using a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter. Disinfectants are seldom needed to perform an effective remediation (unless there is also a sewage problem). The use of gaseous, vapor-phase, or aerosolized (e.g. fogging) biocides are not usually recommended by environmental or public health agencies.

Follow label instructions when using cleaning materials, including proper protection and ventilation. If you choose to remediate without the assistance of a mold abatement expert, take precautions to protect yourself from exposure during cleaning by wearing respiratory protection, gloves and goggles.

Make efforts to limit dust generation.

Make sure that all materials are completely dry and visibly free from mold after remediation is completed and before beginning any rebuilding efforts. Give consideration to cleaning areas adjacent to visible mold to remove settled spores and mold fragments.

Using a Mold Abatement Expert?

There are no official state or local licenses or certifications specifically for mold abatement experts. However, all businesses in New York must be registered to do business in the state. The following information will assist you in checking the legitimacy and the complaint history of a company you are considering hiring:

- **Check licenses.** Companies that market themselves as "Home Improvement Contractors" must be licensed in New York City, Suffolk, Nassau, Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland counties, and in the City of Buffalo.

  New York City Department of Consumer Affairs
  " 311" or www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/licenses/license_check.shtml

  Nassau County Office of Consumer Affairs
  516-571-2600 (press option 1) or www.nassaucountyny.gov/vendor_lookupWeb

  Suffolk County Office of Consumer Affairs
  631-853-4600 (press option 3) or www.suffolkcountyny.gov/consumeraffairs

  Westchester Dept. of Consumer Protection
  914-995-2155 or www.consumer.westchestergov.com

  Putnam County Dept. of Consumer Protection
  845-808-1617 or www.putnamcountyny.com/index.php/consumer-affairs/outstanding-violations

  Rockland County Dept. of Consumer Protection
  845- 708-7600 or www.rocklandgov.com/departments/consumer-protection-weights-and-measures/licensed-businesses/

  City of Buffalo
  716-851-4078 or 716-851-6594 or www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/EDPIS/Licenses/LicensedContractors