ABATEMENT — GUIDE

Mold remediation: fix the moisture source

Use EPA guidance to scope cleanup and decide when to seek help.

Updated November 10, 2026

Find the moisture problem

EPA says mold cleanup is not complete unless the water problem is fixed. Identify the leak, condensation or other moisture source before you accept a proposal that only cleans visible staining. Ask how the contractor will confirm that the cause has been addressed. [EPA mold guidance]

Record the rooms, affected surfaces, visible spread, odors and known water events. Take photos without opening suspect wall cavities. Tell the contractor about recurring damage and any ventilation system concerns.

Size is a planning aid

EPA says that if mold covers less than about 10 square feet, people can in most cases handle cleanup themselves using its guidance. It advises consulting its schools and commercial buildings guidance for larger areas or substantial water damage. This is guidance, not a universal licence threshold or a guarantee that a small job is safe. [EPA mold guidance]

EPA advises professional help where sewage or other contaminated water caused the damage. It also says not to run an HVAC system if you know or suspect it is contaminated with mold. Consult a health professional before cleanup if you have health concerns. [EPA mold guidance]

Questions for a contractor

Ask about experience with similar buildings and request references. EPA recommends checking references and asking whether the contractor follows EPA or other professional guidance. Ask what will be cleaned, what will be removed and how nearby occupied areas will be protected. [EPA mold guidance]

Do not accept a proposal based only on a product name. Require a moisture correction scope, cleanup scope, waste arrangements and completion criteria. Ask how unresolved leaks will affect the warranty or return visit.

Check completion

EPA says the water problem should be fixed, visible mold and moldy odors should not be present, and the site should be revisited for signs of water damage or growth. Ask the contractor to explain what it inspected and what remains inaccessible. [EPA mold guidance]

Do not use this guide as an asbestos or lead clearance process. If the cleanup will disturb old building material or paint, ask about those hazards before removal begins. The appropriate credential and assessment depend on the location and the work.

Sources

All sources below were fetched and checked on 2026-11-10. This is the check date, not a claim about publication date.

- EPA mold guidance, accessed 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Does this guide replace a project assessment?

No. Confirm the scope and current requirements with the responsible authority and a qualified professional.