

Directorate of Public Works-Environmental

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DPW works to help Soldiers with mold issues

By Christine Luciano

If there is green or black stuff growing on your walls or ceilings, then most likely you have a mold problem. If this is the situation in your barracks or office facilities, react immediately by reporting it to the Directorate Public Works Maintenance service order desk at 287-2113, contacting your engineering representative, or contacting your barracks management office. Recently, there has been an increase of mold situations on the Installation. DPW is relying on customers to report any mold issues so that mold remediation efforts can be executed.

“In some situations you will walk into an office building and there will be mold all over the ceiling,” said Emmet Gray, Chief of Barracks Management. “Soldiers have responded by saying ‘it has always been like that and we haven’t paid much attention.’ ”

Gray emphasized that a quick response and quick identification is vital to avoid mold situations that could possibly take over a room and cause an entire facility to shut down for remediation. “Part of the problem is that Soldiers are not turning in service orders,” Gray said. “Don’t work or live in a place that has mold without telling somebody.”

Recently the workload has increased to over 672 rooms covering over 60 buildings on the Installation. The Barracks Management team is helping these Soldiers in moldy rooms to relocate. To ensure the safety of Soldiers, DPW is conducting a 100 percent barracks room survey over the next couple of weeks to identify any issues of mold.

Fort Hood’s mold situations can be related to three water sources: rain coming in through roof leaks or windows, plumbing issues, and condensation collected in the air conditioner coils. “The majority of Fort Hood’s mold problems are because the air conditioner coils get wet and condensation collects,” Gray said. “Instead of having one central air conditioning unit with one coil set up for a single barracks, each room has its own coil set up. So now there are thousands of drip lines, pans, and hoses that have to be checked for condensation in each block.”

Setting the air conditioner at extremely low temperatures can cause condensation. In one situation, a barracks room was set at 60 degrees and there was no mold present. But condensation had built up in the rooms above and on both sides causing mold to develop.

If an administrative facility or office has a mold situation, DPW Real Property will work with units to move them to other facilities and offices within their footprint. “As soon as a mold situation is reported and it is in a condition that a unit cannot inhabit, DPW attempts to move the Soldiers out of the facility as fast they can,” said Bradford Britain, Mold Remediation Team Leader for DPW Engineering. “DPW has not had an instance, that once reported and identified, a group has had to stay in a dangerously moldy facility.” Even though there is a shortage of two

million square feet of facilities for Soldiers, the Command and DPW Real Property are working promptly on solutions to help Soldiers relocate.

Mold has been given a priority two. Within ten days of a service order being called in, DPW Maintenance will come out to your site to evaluate the mold situation. If DPW Maintenance cannot remediate the situation, they will generate an independent job order which will be sent to mold experts within DPW Engineering in order to begin putting together a project. "At the time it is sent to Engineering, we confer with Industrial Hygiene to make sure they understand a situation has come up and allow them the opportunity to test an area," Britain said. "But because of the limited resources, DPW Engineering will hire experts to test the mold areas as well."

"The best guidance to prevent mold is reporting sources of water leaks to DPW and making sure the air conditioner is set a reasonable level right around 75 to 78 degrees," Britain said. "Classically people thought if they had a mold problem, they could freeze it out, but that only makes the situation worse."

Currently there is approximately \$2 million that will be immediately committed to 14 projects covering 16 buildings that will start mold remediation in the next month. Each project has between one and three buildings; 10 and 50 service orders; and varies in severity from a condensate line leak to situations where the whole building is black.

If mold is present in your office facilities, immediately report it to the DPW Maintenance service order desk at 287-2113 or your engineering representative. For mold situations in the barracks, contact your barracks management office.