

Mold

Background: There are more than 100,000 known species of mold, at least 1,000 of which are common in the United States. Many molds are vital to our everyday life and are used in the production of everything from baked goods to penicillin. According to the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC), molds are present everywhere –indoors and outdoors, in the air and on most common surfaces.

Mold growth in homes and buildings usually indicates that there is a water leak or the presence of excessive moisture. Quick action to repair water leaks and resolve excessive condensation, infiltration, or flooding –as well as routine maintenance and common sense repair measures taken by home and building owners –will largely prevent mold growth in the home and workplace. According to CDC, no scientific study has been performed to date that establishes a direct relationship between mold contamination and health impacts. While molds have been known to trigger asthma attacks for individuals with mold allergies, no conclusive study exists that links mold to other adverse health effects. With the lack of scientific data linking mold to adverse health effects, mold litigation has increased in frequency. This wave of litigation will have tremendous impacts on different businesses, including the insurance, construction, and contracting communities. Mold related claims have increased nationwide and have contributed to rising insurance rates. In 2001, in Texas, mold claims in the state generated \$853 million in losses, up from \$151 million the year before. Due to the nature of the work performed by PHCC members, including service and repair and new construction, the plumbing heating cooling industry continues to be the target of frivolous lawsuits.

Status: Legislation addressing the mold issue was introduced during the 107th Congress. The comprehensive legislation was referred to several committees where it failed to receive serious consideration.

PHCC of Nevada Position: PHCC would support legislation to fund studies identifying a causal relationship between mold and adverse health effects; for additional research and public education on mold effects; and limit liability for actual damages caused by plumbing heating cooling contractors. PHCC believes that before Congress creates any legal standards and thresholds, more comprehensive research on the mold issue is needed.

Government Relations Committee Approval:
Board of Directors Approval: Feb. 2, 2009