



What are Mold Scams and How do I avoid them?

Unfortunately, the mold industry is new and is currently unregulated and unlicensed. The demand for mold testing and mold remediation has exploded along with mold scammers ridding people of their money, not their mold. To avoid being a victim of a mold scam, if you have a possible mold problem, please hire a **Certified Mold Inspector**. The Indoor Air Quality Association supports over 5000 members in the mold industry throughout the US and Canada and has a Council Division dedicated to teaching, testing and project verification that awards members their certifications. One of the highest certifications given is the **Council-Certified Microbial Inspector**.

Here are several leading mold scams and how to avoid being a victim:

Door to Door Air Quality Tester

- Knock-Knock, it's not AVON calling. The heist to sell you a \$3000 air purifying machine is set up through a "Petri dish" test left in your home to see what grows. The sales person leaves the dish to collect airborne bacteria and mold spores. The opportunistic bacteria and molds grow on the media in the Petri dish and upon return, the salesperson then has "proof" that your indoor air quality is poor and the "cure" is to purchase a magic machine to purify the air. What they don't tell you: Bacteria and mold spores are everywhere and that means in your home, in my home, and outside. If these specialists come 'a' calling have them leave an almighty Petri dish outside (or the garage) and inside. Or if you have the machine installed have them leave you another Petri dish. Let's see what we get? I guarantee that mold will grow on that Petri dish with our without the HEPA \$3000.

Home Owner's

- Home owner's try to sell their home fully aware of the fact that the basement has been flooded and was not dried properly, or that the basement is leaking, or that the home was previously used as a grow operation for marijuana. Homes can be masked with air fresheners during every walk through of the purchasing process. The home is painted fresh and nothing VISIBLE is suspicious.
- The home inspector is dependent on leads from your real estate agent and down plays a wet basement. Wet basements not only signify potential mold growth and possibly expensive remediation but also waterproofing of the foundation. This alone can start at \$10,000 on average.

House Cooking

- In order to justify expensive mold remediation work, a mold inspector can increase the temperature and humidity in a home by shutting off the air conditioning, closing windows, running humidifiers and hot showers full blast in order to cause high levels of detectable mold to justify expensive mold remediation work.

Fraudulent Mold Testing

- Mold inspectors who produce lab results showing excessive mold spore levels taken from your home or property when the lab results are NOT actually from your home but are, in fact, samples that had been exposed to large amounts of mold species from other locations or from their own mold collections.

Improper Mold Removal

- Removing mold without proper equipment such as negative air machines, HEPA filters, gloves, masks, containment tarping/plastic to keep spores localized and not using a fungicide to kill surface mold can leave the home with higher mold spore levels than before.
- Using chlorine bleach to kill mold.

Using Ineffective Chlorine Bleach to Kill Mold

- Many mold remediation companies use chlorine bleach as their preferred chemical to allegedly kill mold to cut corners and costs in their mold remediation jobs. Unfortunately, chlorine bleach is not an effective or lasting killer of mold and mold spores. Bleach is good only for changing the color of the mold. Three weeks after treatment with chlorine bleach, the mold will return if the moisture problem is not fixed.

Particle Counting

- This tool is used to count all types of airborne particles in different areas of a building or home and compared to outdoors. This does not differentiate against mold spores. The results include dust, hair, skin cells, pet dander, pollen etc. Mold is not properly assessed using a particle counter. Inaccuracies can be made often for example when a neighbour starts cutting the lawn just before particle counting begins. The lawn cutting stirs up debris and increases the particles in the outdoor air and in the kitchen with the open window facing the neighbours home. The kitchen is not elevated compared to the rest of the home. The results of the particle counter-what does this really mean? Nothing? Nothing.

Ozone Generators

- Ozone promoters that claim that injecting massive amounts of ozone gas into a home will kill all of the mold in the building. Ozone only kills what it comes into contact with. Ozone does not penetrate, and thus cannot kill, mold growing INSIDE drywall, wall, carpeting, upholstered furniture, wall cavities, ceiling cavities, and floor cavities.
- Dead or alive mold spores can affect the human body.
- Besides being ineffective at killing hidden mold, ozone readily damages all rubber and plastic parts it comes into contact with such as rubber and plastic components of appliances, electronics of all types, exposed electric lines and extension cords, and HVAC controls.
- Ozone is also unhealthy to humans according to the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada**. See Health Canada's Advisory of Ozone machines: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/1999/1999_62_e.html
- The verdict against the Ozone Generator company, Alpine Industries Inc., had the state prove that Alpine's claims about cleaning and purifying the air with ozone were bogus: http://www.michbar.org/opinions/us_appeals/2003/092603/21545.pdf

Thermal Imaging Myths

- Thermal Imaging is not an x-ray machine.
- Thermal Imaging cameras do not see through walls.
- Thermal Imaging cameras do not detect mold growth.
- Thermal Imaging cameras do not detect moisture.
- Thermal Imaging does detect the temperature on a surface and the temperature is represented by a colour on the camera screen.
- Thermal Imaging is a great tool in detecting moisture problems as moist materials will carry a different temperature and thus moisture, or poorly insulated materials can be detected.