

## MOLD

Mold will appear on the surface of drywall and wood, as well as on fabric materials in your home if the conditions that support mold growth are present. These conditions are:

- Mold Spores
- A food source (eg. wood, drywall, cotton)
- Darkness (mold can't grow under ultraviolet light)
- Warmth (mold can't grow in freezing temperatures)
- Oxygen
- Moisture (eg. Water leaks or humidity)
- Enough time (most molds can begin to grow in 24-48 hours if conditions are right)

Moisture levels in the home (typically in the form of humid air) will be the determining factor as to whether mold will appear. All other conditions on the list are present in every home, and are virtually uncontrollable. However, by controlling the moisture level inside the home, especially in the basement areas, where air in contact with cooler surfaces can condense, you will prevent mold from appearing.

Indoor humidity levels must be kept below 55% to avoid mold growth. You can use the knob dial on the HRV control and rotate it to see at what moisture level it 'clicks', which is a reading of the humidity level at that location. You can assume that the humidity level in the basement is most likely several points higher than the level indicated by the dial. If the humidity level in the home is 55% or higher, you must reduce the level to avoid mold growth. This can be done by the following;

- Heating/Air conditioning fan is in the 'ON' position (not 'Auto')
- Air conditioning on and set to 72 F (22 C) or lower (summer months)
- HRV control knob in 'OFF' position and the HRV unit in the utility room in 'OFF' position during the summer months (no green light activated beside the switch). Use of the HRV during the summer time will introduce humid air from the exterior into the home. The HRV should only be on in winter to ventilate the home during the heating season.
- The use of a floor-level fan(s) in the lower level along with leaving doors open to prevent stagnant air to be present in any area within the basement is suggested
- The use of a portable dehumidifier in the basement may be required in some instances
- The HRV should be used during the heating months to ventilate the home and control the moisture levels.

Mold in basements of homes is a common occurrence where the conditions for growth are present. Maintaining acceptable humidity levels in the home by adhering to the above suggestions will prevent mold growth. If some growth has occurred, the use of an off-the-shelf mold cleaner and remover such as CLR Mold Remover (available at WalMart) is suggested.