



MONTHLY

News and Views from the Connecticut Association of Home Inspectors, Inc.

January 2007

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The Truth About Mold

Article submitted by Barry Small

There is no place on the planet Earth that man can go and avoid microorganisms. A single sneeze from a healthy person may release as many as 100,000 viable organisms. In "healthy" air, it is very common to encounter molds and bacteria. There may be as many as 1.5 million different species of fungi on Earth and approximately 70,000 different species have been fully described.

Molds are any kind of fungi that at some point in their lives grow extended appendages called "hyphae." Molds are filamentous fungi. The hyphae form mats called "mycelium" which are usually easily seen with the naked eye.

All molds are fungi, but not all fungi are molds. Fungi are found on humans, in and on houseplants, in wine, beer, cheese, and maple syrup. We encounter fungi directly in our diets when we eat; and perhaps the most famous fungi food of all - the French truffle: Tuber magnatum. Virtually every tree, houseplant, and bush probably is aided into full health by the mycorrhizae molds which are intractably bound about its roots; and without which many plants could not survive.

Several studies have been conducted concerning the prevalence of molds in "normal, clean" homes. These studies have shown in excess of 10 million spores per gram of dust are present.

Levels in excess of the above do not necessarily imply that the conditions are unsafe or hazardous. The type and concentration of the airborne microorganisms determines the hazard to inhabitants. The Centers for Disease Control reported that during its investigations of reports of poor indoor air quality, microbiological contamination was suspected in only 5% of the cases.

It is impossible to know the spore count of a house based on two or three samples (let alone one sample), and there is no scientific validity to correlate indoor samples to outdoor samples in closed building conditions. That is - it is inappropriate to state that indoor levels are elevated based on the outdoor concentrations, for closed building conditions.

Therefore, once it is recognized that all carpets in homes contain fungi, often at very high concentrations, the importance of such contamination is far less significant than elevated airborne fungal spores. It must be recognized that all homes contain potentially "toxic molds" on surfaces and in the air.

It has been estimated that between 10% and 20% of the U.S. population exhibits an allergic reaction to something and up to 6% of the general population have a respiratory allergy to fungi. There are four general classifications of allergic responses, Type I "anaphylactic" response is the type of reaction that is the vastly predominate health hazard associated with indoor molds. Briefly, anaphylaxis and other hypersensitivities arise when an individual's immune system launches an inappropriate full-scale "attack" against what is probably an otherwise harmless agent.

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Meeting Dates

Jan 24 *Plumbing and Water Purification* – Dale Abbott, A-Water Solutions of CT, LLC

Feb 28 *Wood destroying Insects* - John O'Brien, MasterShield

Mar 28 *Chimneys* – Jim Jaffe, CT Chimney & Vent

Holiday Inn
201 Washington Ave
North Haven
(203) 239-6700

President's Corner

Bernie Caliendo

I hope everyone had a great holiday season, especially some quality family time. I wish all of you a prosperous New Year! I would like to thank all of you who participated in our survey. The tabulated results are available in this month's newsletter. Our membership is over 150 and growing every month. Welcome to our new members and a big thanks to those who remain an integral part of our organization!

As we are always striving to bring the best continuing education to you, we have reviewed the survey and listened to your wants and needs. This month, we have a plumbing presentation for our monthly meeting. In addition, we were in the process of having the Commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) come and address us in April but he was not reappointed by the Governor. As of this writing, the Governor has not announced a replacement. I'm sure a new commissioner will need to get up to speed before he can make an appearance before home inspectors.

We have speakers booked through the fall and are listed on our web site. We will be entering a new Continuing Education cycle in July. In September, we are bringing back Tim Mikloiche from Electrical Training Services, LLC in September. Everyone who attended his lecture in September of 2005 knows his knowledge and his presentation hit the ball out of the park. Other monthly presentations will include asbestos, wood destroying insects, lead, mold and a multitude of other topics that have been requested by our members.

In the planning stages are another bus trip and a certification radon seminar. As soon as these are confirmed, information will be announced in the newsletter and by special e-mails. These two events are likely to happen sooner than later. Those of you who have not yet attended a 3-hour, required, CT Law seminar for the present license renewal cycle, we have ours scheduled for Saturday, January 13, 2007 - 8:30 am to 11:30 am – get er done! This is the last CAHI sponsored law seminar this year. See the notice in this newsletter for details.

Finally, CAHI is experiencing some growing pains. The Board has been involved in promoting our association to the real estate community. We are in the process of advancing our association through advertising all around the state to help promote CAHI in the marketplace and help consumers find our members. Everyone will benefit from this endeavor.

Best wishes in the New Year!
Bernie

January Keynote Speaker

This month's meeting topic is **Plumbing and Water Purification.**

Our meeting will feature Dale Abbott, from A-Water Solutions of CT, LLC who has 25 years experience in the field. His background includes 2 years on the Board of Director's Advisory Board for Water Technology Magazine, technical advisor for the CPTV Emmy nominated "Troubled Waters" special, and technical assistant for Nancy Aborn's "Connecticut Earth" series on WTNH.

Dale will be covering many topics concerning plumbing, electrical, drinking water, plus

2 hours of Continuing Education Credits

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The concentration of an allergen needed to elicit a response so serious that a sensitive individual may die may be thousands of times lower than that needed to invoke so much as a sniffle in an equally healthy, but non-sensitized person.

Anaphylaxis is commonly known for its extreme manifestation called "anaphylactic shock." However, anaphylaxis also occurs in degrees. "Shock" is the most extreme anaphylactic reaction. Other milder forms of anaphylactic reactions such as those which occur in "hay fever" are more common.

Celery, lobster, peanuts, and a host of other common foods can make the sensitive person uncomfortable, ill or even kill a person who exhibits a hypersensitivity to any particular common food. Yet, we do not speak of "toxic peanuts" or "toxic milk." Even the term "toxic mold" is a meaningless term, used mostly by the press and by individuals who are not familiar with mycology or toxicology. It is thought that, in theory, virtually all molds have the potential to all degrees of anaphylaxis (including anaphylactic shock) following exposure. The common mushroom can be as toxic as the deadly Amanita mushroom to the person who is allergic to it. Therefore, all molds have the potential to be "toxic molds." However, as recent as November 2002, a prestigious medical organization, The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine reported that indoor molds, compared to outdoor molds, were considered only a minor factor in the development of allergic airway disease. Similarly, it has also been reported that indoor exposure to cats, dust mites and cockroaches probably cause more health problems than do indoor molds.

"Mycoses" refers to conditions in which fungi pass the resistance barriers of the body and establish infection. But, apart from a relatively few fungi which attack human skin (athlete's foot, jock itch, nail fungus); fungi rarely infect man or other animals. There are, however, some fungal diseases that are endemic in the United States. One of the most highly endemic regions is in the San Joaquin Valley of California. The infection, known as San Joaquin Valley Disease or Valley Fever, although usually asymptomatic, is virtually universal where perhaps as many as 80% of those residing in this area become affected within five years of initial residency.

Yet, in spite of its huge impact on society, it is curious that the popular media has not given Valley Fever or jock itch the same notoriety as other "toxic indoor molds" and has not turned common mold infections into the household name the way it did with *Stachybotrys*. The

fact of the matter is that headlines about "athlete's foot" don't sell newspapers like "toxic mold" headlines. In writing about the current public concern about indoor molds, Dr. Emil J. Bardana, Jr., M.D. of the Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland stated:

This contemporary public health problem has frequently been discussed in the media and cyberspace without the benefit of scientific peer review. As a result, there has been distortion and exaggeration of the facts, and promotion of a brand of "toxic terror" among the population; ie, "babies dying of black mold exposure" is much more dramatic and fear-evoking than "babies dying of unknown causes."

In June of 2000 at the School of Public Health, Harvard University in Boston, Dr. Harriet Burge, Professor of Microbiology at Harvard, lectured that, to her knowledge, not a single case of confirmed mycotoxicosis (disease resulting from toxic by-products of fungal infection) due to indoor air had yet been reported. However, Dr. Burge acknowledged the valid role of molds in producing other indoor air complaints. In addition, during a professional conference in April of 2002 in Austin, Dr. Burge cautioned professionals in the field to avoid using the inappropriate terms such as "toxic molds" and "pathogenic molds" to describe indoor molds and indoor mold exposures in an effort to curtail unwarranted public fears.

The state-of-the-art guidance document on fungal remediation is thought by many to be the [Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments](#) which was published by the New York City Department of Health, Bureau of Environmental & Occupational Disease Epidemiology in April of 2000. According to those guidelines:

There are only a limited number of documented cases of health problems from indoor exposure to fungi. The presence of fungi on building materials as identified by a visual assessment or by bulk/surface sampling results does not necessitate that people will be exposed or exhibit health effects. In order for humans to be exposed indoors, fungal spores, fragments, or metabolites must be released into the air and inhaled, physically contacted (dermal exposure), or ingested.

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Tid Bits

➤ **Crown Boiler Co. Recalls Boilers Due to Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Hazard**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of Product: Bermuda BSI and Cayman CWI Series Gas Boilers

Units: About 400

Manufacturer: Crown Boiler Co., of Philadelphia, Pa.

Hazard: The boilers can generate excessive levels of carbon monoxide (CO) in the flue gases, posing a risk of CO poisoning.

Incidents/Injuries: Crown Boiler has received one report of high levels of carbon monoxide from these boilers. No injuries have been reported.

Description: The recall involves Bermuda BSI and Cayman CWI Series gas-fired boilers designed for indoor installation. Model and serial numbers included in this recall are listed below and are located on the rating plate. The boilers have a two-tone, red and gray jacket closure with the controls and piping on the right side of the unit. The rating plate is a silver label located in the upper left hand corner of the right side panel.

Model Numbers: BSI069SN BSI069EN, BSI172SL,
BSI172EL, CWI069SN. CWI069EN, CWI172SL,
CWI172EL

Serial Numbers: CROWNB000304258 and
CROWNB000411446

Sold by: Plumbing and heating wholesale distributors to plumbers and contractors nationwide from October 2002 through October 2006 for between \$800 and \$2,100.

Manufactured in: United States

Remedy: Consumers who have not already been contacted by their contractor should immediately contact their installer or Crown Boiler Co. to arrange for a free repair. Consumers are reminded to install a CO alarm outside all sleeping areas, or make sure their current CO alarms have working batteries.

Consumer Contact: For more information, contact Crown Boiler Co. toll-free at (877) 597-3321 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday, or visit the firm's Web site at www.crownboiler.com.

To see this recall on CPSC's web site, including pictures of the recalled products, please go to:

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Further, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine in November 2002, issued a peer reviewed Evidence Based Statement, wherein they made the observation that:

...years of intensive study have failed to establish exposure to Stachybotrys chartarum in home, school, or office environments as a cause of adverse human health effects.

Some researchers reporting in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization have attempted to clinically establish a dose-response relationship between airborne spores and adverse effects. In a home that contained an extremely elevated Stachybotrys spore count of say, 200 Stachybotrys spores per cubic meter of air, a person would have to spend 10,822 years in the house 24 hours per day, seven days per week to receive the necessary dose.

Dr. Abba Terr M.D. summed up the medical field's opinion late last year in a peer-reviewed journal when he wrote:

No convincing cases of human allergic disease or infection from this mold [Stachybotrys] have been published. [He concluded] The current public concern for adverse health effects from inhalation of Stachybotrys spores in water-damaged buildings is not supported by published reports in the medical literature.

Referenced from: "Health Effects of Moulds (Molds): State of Knowledge; Connell, Caoimhin; Forensic Applications Consulting Technologies, Inc., Bailey CO; 5/20/05

Articles published in the CAHI Monthly are the sole opinion of the author. CAHI does not endorse or state a position for or against the content of said articles.

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CT Law Seminar

Featuring Attorney Kent Mawhinney

Sponsored by CAHI

Saturday, January 13th
8:30 to 11:30 am

Holiday Inn
201 Washington Ave (Rte 5)
North Haven, CT



**Last Chance...
Sign up NOW**

Anyone who has attended our law seminars in the past and has heard Kent speak realizes he is the most informative and well received presenter on the CT Law required 3 hour course in the state today! Since CAHI only sponsors this course once a year in January and licensing renewal is coming up in June 07, don't wait until the last minute and be stuck trying to find a provider. The CT Law course is not available every month by any provider. Get it in your continuing education portfolio for license renewal now!

CAHI provides the best deal in the state. \$99 for everything!

- Early start time and a weekend date
- Continental breakfast
- Refreshments at the breaks
- Conference room setting
- Attendance certificates which meet the minimum requirements as set forth by the Home Inspection Licensing Board
- Free parking
- Easy on/off access to I-91 (exit 12 from north and south. Take a right off either exit. Holiday Inn is on the left).

Register:

1. **www.ctinspect.com** – On the Home page click on "Special Events", pick "Law Seminar", fill out the form, click on Check-out, fill in the credit card information (this is a secure page) and you're done.
2. **Mail** a check for \$99.00 made out to CAHI, along with your name, address and phone/email to CAHI Treasurer, 18 Garden Place, Derby, CT 06418.

This course is OPEN TO ALL - members, non-members, inspectors, interns, trades people, etc.

Home inspector interns are not required to complete this seminar during your internship. However, information at this seminar is invaluable to all and some content may be of help for the required CT Law Exam before licensure. CAHI recommends interns attend.

Knowledge is the basis of your expertise.

Licensing Board Update

Breaking News:

Governor Rell has nominated a new Commissioner for the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP). The nominee is Attorney Gerald Farrell Jr. of Wallingford who has been the Deputy Commissioner of DCP since August 2004. Attorney Farrell practiced law for 11 years before being appointed Deputy Commissioner. Commissioner Edwin Rodriguez was not reappointed by the Governor who begins her first full term as Governor.

Public Hearing Analysis

As scheduled, the Public Hearing on Dec. 15th was held at DCP. Testimony was given against, for and with modifications to the proposed amendment to the Standards of Practice concerning homes serviced by private wells on site.

CAHI was represented opposing the new regulation as written and testimony was given addressing the concerns of home inspectors being required to perform a "test" which is not required in any National or State "Standards of Practice". Some proposed inspection requirements are already stated in the CT Standards on plumbing and appears to include what should be required making this proposed amendment unnecessary. Section 20-491-6 a. states: "The inspector shall inspect the interior water supply and distribution system..." and Section 20-491-6 b. states: "The inspector shall describe the water supply...". This appears to address identifying what type of water supply is present and describing the interior system. As far as performing a test and reading & recording gauges, this proposal goes far beyond what a home inspector is REQUIRED to do. These services should be done by qualified, trained professionals and offered as optional, additional services. We are not required to test or record readings of components on other systems inspected (ie: boilers and steam plants, hot water heaters, appliances, or report their efficiency or adequacy) and we should not start now. Our position was to let this proposal go no further and die.

The current CT Standards do not prevent anyone from reporting on or ignoring well components that are seen. However, this proposal goes far beyond what should be required. Determining the accuracy or adequacy of a well system in this proposed amendment could expose the inspector to a major liability case for following some new Standard like this. Having served on the initial licensing board that approved most formal training schools, no curriculums included training inspectors to meet this new

proposal. Will all formal training schools across the nation be required to amend their curriculum for Connecticut training if this becomes law?

ASHI representatives from within the state gave testimony in favor of this new proposal with some substitute language that would delete the testing and recording of gauge readings in the original text proposal along with deleting present sections of the Standards "exclusions" on well and pump reporting items.

Also, a well association representative gave testimony in favor of this proposal as is and asked that inspecting for back flow prevention devices be included in any final new text.

The position of CAHI has always been to look out for the best interest of our clients. However, some of the requirements in this proposed amendment go above and beyond a "visual inspection" and the capabilities of even seasoned inspectors to interpret results of inaccurate gauge reading which could lead to a false sense of proper pressures being reported. (Most gauges are the originally installed equipment and probably have never been recalibrated.) The new requirement is to observe a full cycle of the system while "open full" 2 cold water faucets at sinks in the home. These sinks may not be readily available where the well system components are located. This new requirement could lead to overflow of water at sinks as far away as the second floor of the home, thus possible water damage to the interior of the home.

It's not that we don't care, it's just that anything put in the hands of uninformed legislators who don't understand our profession, and usually don't read testimony for objections to currently proposed requirements or proposed changes to the amendment, tend to pass amendments "as is". What other adoptions could be made that appear to be beyond the scope of the home inspector now or in the future? Just look at the conflicting language in the statute that licensed home inspectors back in 2001. Items that have never been corrected or the conflicting regulations in item 12 of the "Limitations & Exclusions" of the Standards that has never been corrected. Believe me, we have asked on numerous occasions. Once it becomes law, it's there to stay. Inconsistencies, misinterpretations or conflicting language will be decided by lawyers and a judge.

We will keep you up to speed on this issue as it moves ahead or dies.

CAHI Survey Results

We tabulated all of the surveys returned to us. All names, fax numbers and addresses have been deleted and destroyed in order to keep this survey anonymous, as advertised. The purpose of the survey was to gauge our profession and our members, in particular, on where we stand in the marketplace since licensing took effect. Additionally we sought out how our members feel about our association, including their needs and wants. Your opinions, suggestions and topics will be addressed by the Board. ***We thank all who participated.***

Licensed: 89% **Interns:** 11%

All results are in percentages based on the number of responses.

Acting Supervisor: Yes - 34% No - 50% Willing to - 16%

Do you carry E & O: Yes - 60% No - 40%

Have you benefited from licensing: Yes - 69% No - 31%

Years inspecting:

less than 3 years -	19%
3 to 6 years -	37%
6 to 10 years -	12%
10 to 15 years -	13%
15 to 20 years -	14%
Over 20 years -	5%

Residential - 52% **Commercial** - 48%

Additional services offered:

Termite -	71%
Well Analysis -	81%
Well Recovery -	48%
Septic -	23%
Lead -	18%
Mold/IAQ -	9%
Asbestos -	8%
Radon in Air -	99%
Radon in Water -	95%
Other -	1%

Basic inspection fee:

\$150 to 225 -	8%
\$225 to 300 -	10%
\$300 to 375 -	38%
\$375 to 450 -	32%
\$450 to 525 -	8%
\$525 to 600 -	2%
Over \$600 -	2%

Average inspections performed per year:

Less than 100 -	28%
100 to 200 -	32%
200 to 300 -	30%
300 to 400 -	10%
Over 400 -	0%

Pre-Inspection Agreement used: Yes - 100% No - 0%

Average pages used in report:

Under 10 -	6%
11 to 20 -	39%
21 to 30 -	21%
Over 30 -	34%

Photography used in reports: Yes - 41% No - 59%

Use our web site for info: Yes - 54% No - 46%

Registered for message board: Yes - 53% No - 47%

Need to use our free library: Yes - 53% No - 47%

Pleased with the quality of our continuing education? Yes - 100% No - 0%

Attend monthly meetings: Often - 85% Occasionally - 15%

Attend our bus trips: Yes - 59% No - 41%

Rate the quality of our newsletter: Excellent - 68% Good - 32% Poor - 0%

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<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml07/07063.html>.

➤ **Trim Assembly Kits for Recessed Light Fixtures Recalled By Progress Lighting Due To Risk of Falling Parts**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of Product: Trim Assembly Kits for Recessed Light Fixtures

Units: About 12,800

Manufacturer: Progress Lighting Inc., of Spartanburg, S.C.

Hazard: Heat from the light bulb can cause the fixture's plastic trim to soften and melt, causing the trim and lens to fall. This can result in laceration injuries to nearby consumers.

Incidents/Injuries: Progress Lighting has received four reports of the trims melting. No injuries have been reported.

Description: Trim assembly kits involved in this recall attach to recessed light fixtures installed primarily in bathroom ceilings. The trim assemblies include a 7 3/4 inch white plastic ring, a glass lens and a metal reflector. Affected models were made in China and have model numbers: 8009-60, 8010-60 or 8011-60. The model number and country of manufacture are located on a sticker attached to the inside and outside of the reflector. Models made in Mexico are not included this recall.

Sold by: Electrical and lighting distributors nationwide from July 2006 through December 2006 for between \$9 and \$27.

Manufactured in: China

Remedy: Consumers should stop using the recessed light fixtures containing the recalled trim rings immediately and contact Progress Lighting to arrange for installation of a replacement trim ring.

Customer Contact: For more information, contact Progress Lighting toll-free at (877) 369-4548 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday, or log on to www.progresslighting.com.

To see this recall on CPSC's web site, including pictures of the recalled products, please go to: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml07/07071.html>.

CAHI Executive Board

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The Licensing Board meetings are held at 9:30 am, Department of Consumer Protection, Room 117, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford.

The public is always welcome.

E-mail Bernie Caliendo for the latest meeting schedule at bsurehomeinspect@juno.com