

## CITY OF BATH, MAINE

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## MOLD

Molds are naturally-occurring organisms that can be found everywhere, both indoors and out. Humans do not live in a mold-free environment, nor would we want to. Molds are a necessary part of our natural environment. Problems occur, however, when conditions indoors allow for excessive mold growth. The primary culprit for this excessive growth is excess moisture. Maintaining your home or building to prevent excess moisture and properly fixing moisture problems when they occur are the keys to preventing both building damage as well as health problems associated with mold. In old and/or poorly insulated buildings, it's not uncommon to have mold form on cold surfaces such as exterior walls. When warm, moist indoor air contacts a surface that's cooler than it, condensation can occur, creating moisture that enables mold to grow. Bathrooms are a common place to find mold. Things that can exacerbate moisture problems are unvented clothes dryers, broken or nonexistent bathroom fans, and building/plumbing leaks. Mold affects different people differently. An amount of mold that has no ill health effects on one person can make another person sick. Due to these variables, there are no quantifiable standards for how much mold is too much. While mold is rarely a codes issue, if it's making someone in the building sick, it may be a violation of the Maine Implied Warranty of Habitability, which is a State law that says that rental housing has to be suitable for you to live in. The law is here:

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/14/title14sec6021.html> .

If a mold problem exists in a building, resolving it is a matter between the building owner and the occupant(s). Below are some resources for people dealing with these sorts of issues.

Maine Attorney General's Office [www.maine.gov](http://www.maine.gov)

207-626-8800 They have a good handout on their website called Consumer Rights in Maine, that has a chapter on rental housing.

Pine Tree Legal Assistance [www.ptla.org](http://www.ptla.org)

207-622-4731 Augusta 207-774-8211 Portland

A free legal assistance program for income eligible Maine residents

The Legal Library section of their website has a good section on housing issues.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection [www.maine.gov\dep](http://www.maine.gov\dep)

207-287-7688 Put "mold" in the search browser and there will be several choices with lots of information on mold.

The Maine Center for Disease Control [www.maine.gov\dhhs](http://www.maine.gov\dhhs)

1-888-821-5821 Put "mold" in the search browser and there will be several choices with lots of information on mold.

The Federal CDC [www.cdc.gov\mold](http://www.cdc.gov\mold)

1-800-232-4636 The site has lots of good information on mold.

If you have questions or need more information, let us know.

2-11-21