Rozelle Interchange
WestConnex

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Mould

Understanding Mould in the workplace

What is Mould and where is it found?

Mould is a type of fungi that is naturally occurring and plays a major role in the earth's ecosystem. There are thousands of species of mould found in almost all environments on the planet. Mould reproduces by making spores. We all interact with mould and its spores on a daily basis and our exposure to it is something we are mostly oblivious to.

Mould can grow anywhere, but is most likely to grow on organic materials like cardboard, wood or food scraps, as well as many construction materials like gyprock, carpet and fabrics. Mould is more likely to grow in warm, moist areas that are poorly ventilated.

What are the health effects associated with mould exposure?

Mould can become hazardous when large, visible colonies grow.

Some health effects from exposure to mould and mould spores include:

- irritation of the nose, throat and respiratory tract
- runny nose, red eyes, sneezing, skin rash
- can cause allergic reactions – more common in asthmatics
- aches and pains
- headaches and occasionally memory loss.

In very rare cases exposure to mould, mould spores or toxins made by mould can have more serious health effects, which include asthma attacks and allergic reactions.

What are we doing to protect you from mould here on the Rozelle Interchange Project?

Mould is practically impossible to completely remove in most environments.

The best solution to combat mould growth across the project is to proactively prevent it.

- Remove cardboard, food and wood waste from site – place in appropriate bin whenever possible, paint wood if it can't be removed (with mould resistant paint).
- Clean up after yourselves in crib areas - food scraps can attract mould growth.
- Maintain ventilation.
- Remove all excess water/moisture.

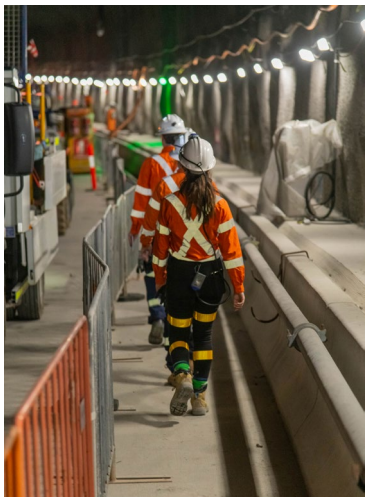
Large scale mould growths can be treated by removing mould from the item, or by removing the item with the mould from site. Smaller visible colonies of mould can be sprayed with a chemical to kill the mould and prevent further growth.

Controls: What we are doing

Above the line
Elimination

Large colonies or outbreaks of mould can undergo mould remediation to remediate/ remove mould colonies from an area or surfaces, but due to mould being ubiquitous in the environment it cannot be eliminated.

We can however work to ensure that existing mould does not enter the workplace by screening deliveries to ensure there is no mould growth prior to sending it into the tunnel.



Above the line
Substitution

- Paint/seal exposed wooden surfaces with mould resistant paint (wood is a potential food sources for mould)
- Mould remediation of an area/surface to remove visible mould colonies from area/surface
- Use Metal/plastic instead of wood
- If wood must be used, use hardwood in preference to soft wood, and use soft wood in preference to 'man-made' woods like MDF, chipboard etc.

Above the line
Isolation

- Air conditioned crib rooms and offices, use of de-humidifiers (although many AC units also de-humidify air)
- Enclosed cabins on mobile plant with air-conditioning (cool air supresses mould growth, and as stated above, many AC units also remove moisture from the air, which also suppresses mould growth)

Above the line
Engineering

- Ventilation system (including fans and scrubbers) to supply fresh (cooler) air to tunnel/ cut and cover/shaft headings and to move air across surfaces (mould typically grows where air is stagnant)
- De-watering pumps to remove excess water from areas
- Use de-humidifiers to remove moisture
- Use air purifiers to remove mould spores from the air

Below the line
Administration

- Documentation that provides advice to all stakeholders on how to control the hazards of heat stress (ie. OHMP, Lvl 1-3 HRAs, Mould ECP, etc.)
- Maintainence of plant/ crib/office air-conditioning systems and dehumidifiers
- Daily ventilation/ air-velocity measurements to inform supervisors on atmospheric conditions and allow appropriate work-rest cycles to be implemented when neccesary.
- OH inspections and spot checks on mould by project Occupational Hygienist
- Toolboxes regarding mould and supervisor training
- Good housekeeping (remove unnessary cardboard/paper/wood)

Below the line
PPE

- Suitable respiratory protective equipment, guidance provided by Occupational Hygienist
- Gloves/coveralls for those involved in mould remediation