The Most Common Mold Species

Penicillium/Aspergillus-The most common mold species to show up in Indoor Air Samples. Most of the hundreds of sub-species are allergenic with only a few that are toxic. This group of species will grow with only the humidity in the air as its water source. An A/C failure will allow this mold to start growing on walls, furniture and clothing.

Cladosporium - The most common mold species and is considered to be an allergenic.

Curvularia – This is another common allergenic mold.

Chaetomium - This is a common water marker that usually indicates wet paper and/or drywall.

Stachybotrys – An excellent water marker and the most common toxic mold species. Stachybotrys Chartarum is the sub-species that need a direct water source to grow. This includes a window, roof or plumbing leak.

Memnoniella – A sister mold to Stachybotrys. The two species will grow together. It is also considered toxic.

It should be noted that there are exceptions at every level. False positives can be caused by a number of different issues. Normal life examples are dust and dirt on fan blades or other surfaces of the home, something in a garbage can or household pets that have been playing outside. When a general home or termite inspection is performed at the same time as the mold inspection it can inadvertently raise the spore counts. This can happen if an interior attic access is opened or the A/C filter is removed from the return before the air sample is performed.

According to the National Allergy Bureau**,** reporting the NAB SCALE (National Allergy Bureau) of mold and pollen counts, considers mold counts in outdoor air of 0-6499 spores per cubic meter of air as low, to 6500 to 12,999 spores per cubic meter of air as moderate, to 13,000 to 49,999 spores per cubic meter of air as high, and above 50,000 as very high. A “high” levels most individuals with any sensitivity will experience symptoms.

The following are common industry levels of spores that can be used as a guide to interpret test results, but again, they are not specific to the household in question as part of this inspection.

0-50 spores - These are only trace levels and are <u>not</u> an issue. Even Stachybotrys is not considered an issue at these levels if the sample does not also contain water markers like Chaetomium and Fusarium or high levels of Penicillium/Aspergillus.

50-200 spores - These are still very low levels. The toxic mold species Stachybotrys and Memnoniella are just about the only species that are considered an issue at this level.

200-500 spores - Up to this point, the most common species (Penicillium/Aspergillus, Cladosporium and Curvularia) are still not an issue and are in the normal range.

500-1500 spores - Sometimes the Penicillium/Aspergillus & Cladosporium levels are in this range and there is not an issue that needs to be remediated. If no water intrusion or mold issue is found during the inspection, these levels can be caused by normal life in an enclosed environment.

1500-3000 spores - This is where the grey area begins. When levels reach this point there may be an issue that needs to be addressed unless there is a corresponding number in the outdoor sample. If no water intrusion or mold issue is found during the inspection these levels can be achieved by a dusty home or A/C system.

3000-10,000 spores - Unless there is a corresponding number in the outdoor sample, this is the point where some remediation may be necessary. If a mold spore source has been identified, then clean up of that area is needed. If there was no water intrusion or mold issue found, the home may need to be cleaned and the duct system should be evaluated.

10,000-25,000 spores - Unless there is a corresponding number in the outdoor sample, a mold spore source has usually been identified and remediation of the area is needed. If there was no water intrusion or mold issue found, the duct system may need to be cleaned and/or a general "Spring Cleaning" of the home.

25,000-75,000+ spores - When spore levels are at this point, a mold issue will be easy to identify. Clean up will be required and should be performed by a Professional Mold Remediator.

75,000-1,000,000+ spores - When spore levels are at this point a mold issue will be evident. Remediation will be required and needs to be performed by a Professional Mold Remediator.