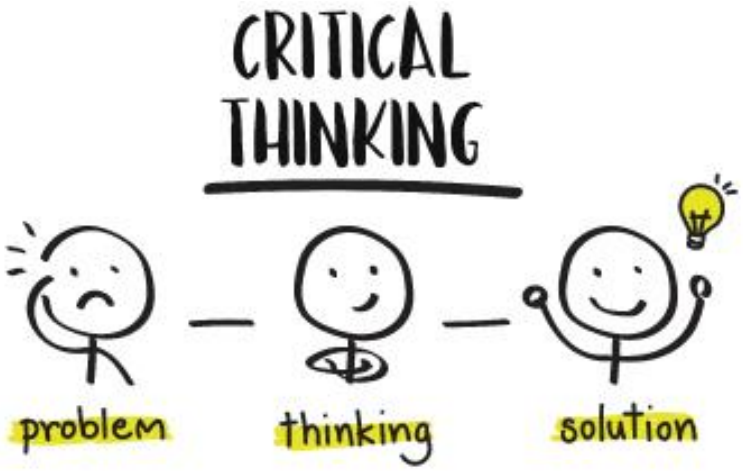
THINK LIKE A MOLD DETECTIVE

One big challenge we face in the mold remediation business, is determining just what type of protocols or steps are necessary on a given remediation project. We obviously want to do a thorough job for our customer and leave them with both a visually clean home and excellent indoor air quality. At the same time, over complicating the process can lead to extended project times resulting in frustration to, and needlessly elevated costs for, our customer.



One major question we need to determine is where the source of the moisture event that precipitated the problem is. This can be a crucial step as it will go a long way in helping us determine the extent of the mold growth and the actual location of the contamination. Possessing that information, we can then proscribe a proper remediation protocol going forward that will fully address the needs of the project without drastically overshooting those needs and performing potentially costly removal and reconstruction protocols that are unnecessary.

There are a number of excellent tools available to us that we can use to perform a thorough investigation of the building environment in question. These tools can help us determine what type of a mold contamination or air quality issue we may be faced with. They can then help us decide on the necessary steps moving forward into the actual remediation process.

1. Gray matter:

Use your brain. Before you dig into your toolbox and whip out the latest expensive tool you purchased…think. Analyze what you know about the project and what type of water event has likely caused or contributed to the mold contamination issue.

We may well have an obvious case of water leakage. Perhaps a broken pipe inside a wall cavity or a water loss from overhead is apparent from a simple visual inspection. This may indicate the presence of water saturation in and around that cavity. Is this an outside wall which would likely be insulated, perhaps trapping that moisture within? If this is the case, then there would be an increased likelihood of mold growth within that cavity. This scenario will typically require some type of further demo and inspection.

If these obvious signs are not present, then we may well have an elevated humidity related event which could indicate more of a surface mold situation that can be handled with a less invasive approach.

2. Thermal imaging meter:

These meters of course do not tell us where there is mold growth. They don't even tell us where there is moisture. What information they do give, is when there is a temperature or thermal variance. In a wall cavity this may indicate the presence of moisture. Further investigation could reveal mold growth. However, thermal variation may also be caused by a void in insulation in an exterior wall or ceiling, resulting in a cold spot. This can be problematic for mold growth as warm humid air in the interior may well cause condensation when coming in contact with that colder region. Great chance for mold growth!

3. Borescope:

This is one of my personal favorites. It can't be beat for checking inside a wall cavity without doing any visible demo. This camera/recorder has a lighted lens at the end of a matriculating arm that allows you to see and record video/stills in places you just can't reach or see. Pop the baseboard along a wall that you suspect might have mold inside the cavity. Place a small quarter size hole in the drywall just above the structural plate line and insert the camera arm in. You can see and record exactly what's going on inside the wall, even reading the print on the back side of the drywall or insulation paper. Obviously, this gives us a view as to whether or not mold growth is present.

4. Hygrometer:

These are basically a moisture meter with a few added features. This is used for determining the specific humidity of materials. Do you have a wall with mold growth on it? Is the material saturated with moisture? Then perhaps that moisture is also internal to the cavity which might indicate possible mold growth inside. Or is the wall dry and yet still you have mold staining. Then it's quite likely you have a scenario where the humidity raises and lowers depending on room usage (such as a bathroom with inadequate ventilation) and this is causing a surface mold situation that can be addressed with minimal or no deconstruction. Additional features such as the monitoring of relative humidity is crucial to determining the conditions that need to be addressed to prevent future mold growth.

5. Particle count meter:

A new player to the interior mold remediators arsenal of tools, the particle meter allows for “real time” testing of the air quality of the indoor environment. These meters detect the presence of airborne particles in a variety of micron sizes. Typically, we would equate elevated air particles to sub-standard air quality. These particles could be from a variety of sources such as dust, pollen, pet dander and others. Mold spores would definitely fall within this list and we can in fact identify the presence of mold spores based on the particle sizes noted. As they are monitoring in real time, they can be used in a way similar to a Geiger counter. Based on where we see greater concentrations of mold spore sized particles we can zero in on the potential “source” of the mold contamination.

Congratulations! Based on your investigation you’ve taken a huge step in determining the possible cause and location of the mold contamination on your project. Now you have the information you need to determine a course of action moving forward. Whether further demo is necessary or not, eventually the remediation of visible mold (whether on the surface or inside opened wall cavities) and airborne mold spores will have to be addressed. Goldmorr USA has a suite of products to help the professional remediator to do just that. Coupled with our unparalleled and ongoing training provided to all Goldmorr users, your company will be equipped to be the industry leader in mold remediation for your market.

Goldmorr, The Easiest, Most Profitable Mold Remediation System…Period!

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