

Prevent Moisture From Damaging Your Home

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(StatePoint) Storm season is here, which means millions of Americans are taking steps from now through November to prevent their homes from flooding and wind damage. Are you ready?

All it takes is a few inches of water to cause major damage to a home and its contents. And the subsequent growth of mold and mildew can wreak even more havoc, leading to structural damage as well as an unhealthy environment, particularly for children, seniors, and individuals with respiratory problems or allergies.

In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warns that exposure to mold can cause symptoms such as nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, wheezing, or skin irritation. Severe reactions can include asthma episodes, fever, shortness of breath and mold infection in the lungs.

“After a flood mold spores can begin to grow and reproduce within 24 to 48 hours,” says Dennis Shireman, a moisture control specialist with DampRid, which makes a line of moisture control products that absorb moisture and reduce humidity to eliminate dampness. “But a few preventative measures can help you protect your home and family.”

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) suggests homeowners fortify doors, windows and the roof against strong winds and water damage. That may mean installing plywood shutters or getting a professional to install necessary add-ons, like dead bolts and metal roofing connectors.

It’s also a good idea to create an emergency preparedness kit that includes a flashlight, first aid kit and blankets. And keep some bottled water and canned food supplies on hand, preferably in a place you know will remain dry.

To get a head-start on mold and mildew prevention before a storm, consider placing a moisture absorber like DampRid, which works naturally to suck moisture out of the air, in such key areas as bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, basements and garages. By placing the absorbent crystals -- which come in hanging bags, refillable buckets and disposable pouches -- in discreet locations, DampRid works with no extra effort from you. Just open and dispose after it has done its job. You can also use it after a storm to rid the air of musty odors and help dry out your home.

If water does get into your home, ventilate it as soon as possible. Then wash surface areas, including walls, staircases and items that came in contact with flood- or rainwater. Disinfect and wipe surfaces dry with paper towels to minimize bacterial contamination.

Throw away any items that do not dry completely because they can harbor germs and produce mold, which can irritate allergies and other respiratory illnesses. And don't be a hero when it comes to clearing fallen trees or electrical lines -- call a specialist.

To learn more about moisture, humidity and mold control, visit www.damprid.com.

Proper preparedness takes some foresight and planning, but a little goes a long way in protecting your home and family.