

Mold Assessments (inspections)

In Florida, any person offering mold related services, or claiming to have a credential of any kind for indoor environmental services, **must be licensed** by the state for mold services. There are two types of licenses; one for **Mold Related Services - Assessor (MRSA)**, and one for **Mold Related Services – Remediator (MRSR)**. The two different licenses exist because anyone who performs mold assessments is not allowed to provide mold remediation, and anyone who performs mold remediation is not allowed to perform mold assessments. The intent of the mold licensing law is to protect the general public by keeping the proverbial wolf away from the hen house. In other words, the separation of licenses and duties is designed to prevent a conflict of interest for consumers and prevent fraudulent activity that previously caused harm to thousands of home owners. You do not want the person who conducts your mold assessment and you are trusting to determine if you have a mold problem to turn around and profit from you by stating you need remediation services for thousands of more dollars. This creates a huge conflict of interest and is entirely unethical by any measure. Unfortunately, that's what can happen if you are uninformed or do not hire a mold assessor first.

Be sure any person or company you consider for mold assessment has an active licensed for “mold assessment” and insured for not less than one million (\$1,000,000) dollars, as required by law. It is very expensive and hard to establish. Be sure to verify that the actual license holder conducts your inspection, not an assistant. To verify a license, go to <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/dbpr>

Also, very important: before hiring a mold assessor, be sure you see a copy of their insurance certificate because the state does not verify or require proof of insurance when a license is issued – a sad loophole by lobbyists. However, the state mold law requires mold service providers to carry \$1MM of insurance at all times.

If you are concerned about mold, be sure you only confer with or hire a licensed and insured “**Mold Assessor**” (MRSA), not a mold remediator, and certainly not a home inspector. Be aware, mold assessors are the top level science professionals in mold and indoor air quality, and are the only licensed professionals allowed to make mold diagnosis and assessments. Also, and MRSA is the professional who writes the protocols to direct the actions of a mold remediator to mold problems. Never hire a remediator first, who then brings in “their” assessor – this is a serious conflict of interest and illegal, and it only favors a remediator, not you.

Mold is a microscopic organism. If any home is tested for mold, it will be found. However, that does not necessarily mean it is a problem. Mold is always present in *every* home, car, office, and building.

Anyone offering a “free” mold analysis should not be believed. To know what type or quantity of mold exists in a home, samples and possibly surface swabs must be taken and submitted for laboratory analysis. A “visual” inspection to confirm mold is impossible, it requires a microscope or other advanced laboratory analysis. Even areas that are suspected to have mold, must be sampled and verified. Mold can be a problem and yet have no visible manifestations. There are more than 100,000 species of mold known to exist; some benign, others more harmful. Only laboratory analysis can tell what type of mold is present in a home, and its concentration.

Also, by design, there is no state or federal standard that defines what constitutes a high or low levels of mold because different people respond differently to different molds. In general, the young, the elderly, persons having allergies, and persons with respiratory

difficulties are more susceptible to issues with mold. You can visit www.EPA.gov/mold for much more information.

A professional mold assessor should also offer ERMI testing and/or allergen testing for their clients. The days of simply taking cheap and easy air sample are hopefully coming to a close. That form of testing can be misleading, but of course remains the most profitable for the service provider. Be sure to call us for consultation and to schedule you mold assessment before calling and mold removal or remediation firm. Your health and financial well being are at stake.