



“Damp ceilings and walls are home to a mould that poses serious health risks... Toxic Mould is estimated to affect well over 3 million homes in the UK”

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
2002



Toxic Mould Detection

RAPID, DNA BASED IDENTIFICATION SERVICE

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CSS Consultants & Specialist Surveyors has introduced a new service for surveyors, FM and property management companies, landlords and the private homeowner that will help to keep residential property free of health threatening mould. Using swab samples taken on site **CSS**, in conjunction with laboratory specialists **Fugenex**, is able to secure fast, accurate identification of the mould species present and to advise the professional consultant or property owner whether it is toxic or not.

- **Rapid mould identification service using Fugenex's innovative DNA technique**
- **Surveying team with extensive experience of damp in buildings**

Toxic Mould Risk

All moulds have the potential to cause health problems and allergic reactions can include eye, nose and throat irritation, coughs and breathing difficulties.

However, two species - *Stachybotrys chartarum* and *Aspergillus fumigatus* - are more dangerous because they produce mycotoxins which can lead to similar but more exaggerated health effects as well as nausea, headaches, rashes and lung infections.

The Problem

Moulds are ubiquitous, naturally occurring fungi and their presence in buildings is encouraged by dampness and condensation which is frequently the consequence of inadequate heating, insulation and ventilation. Mould growth has long been associated with ill health, particularly among the young, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Surveying for Mould

Mould growth usually occurs at about 18-20°C and where relative humidity is in excess of 65%, so obvious potential trouble spots include poorly ventilated washrooms, bathrooms and kitchens. All buildings, new and old, are potentially at risk as a result of modern occupancy lifestyles which generate large quantities of water vapour. It is also likely to flourish after water damage incidents.

However not all fungi are visible as they prefer dark, moist areas and so can colonise inaccessible parts of the home such as in wall cavities, insulation or under floorboards.

Active growth is damp and slimy, but even when inactive, dry and powdery, mould can be dangerous.

Mould Identification

Where visible signs of moulds are present, it is not easy to characterise them into toxic or non-toxic groups using conventional microscopic analysis.

However a breakthrough in biomolecular technology now allows the precise characterisation of the mould type.

So CSS Consultants & Specialist Surveyors has joined forces with laboratory specialists Fugenex, a division of Healthy Office.co.uk Ltd, to provide surveyors and home owners with a rapid identification service.

Using swab samples taken on site by CSS surveyors, Fugenex employ a new DNA technique called Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction (QPCR) which exploits the fact that each living species, including moulds/fungi, has a unique genetic fingerprint.

Not only is an accurate identification achieved but it is much quicker than conventional methods allowing a result within 4 hours.

In this way CSS can provide a valuable support role to the professional property surveyor, particularly in connection with valuations or pre-acquisition surveys and help to avoid potential litigation wrangles in the future.

CSS Consultants & Specialist Surveyors

In association with

fugenex

Surveyors Nationwide

Call 01332 204074

and we will put you in touch with your local Surveyor