

Funky odours or see a spot of spot mould ~ affected less than 1 square metre

Absolutely crucial! Eradicate any moisture and odour problems by tackling their root causes. Take charge of moisture and odour to stop spot mould growth.

Leading Australian and international experts in spot mould-related health issues, along with Building Biologists, strongly advise reducing exposure to spot mould and ensure greatly alleviating negative health impacts.

If you've got funky odours or see a spot of spot mould

newly formed spot mould that is isolated and visible, occupying an area no larger than 1m² (approximately the size of a standard door), it's a situation where the spot mould is unlikely to impact the HVAC system, split air-conditioning system, or the structural integrity of the building.

The root causes of dampness and/or condensation can be readily identified and rectified. This involves the removal, repair, replacement, or improved management of these causes to prevent future occurrences.

If there's any water infiltration, it is not heavily contaminated, falling within Category 1 or 2 water classification. Furthermore, there are no additional hazards present, such as asbestos or toxic chemicals.

Instances of spot mould contamination at this basic level can typically be managed by occupants using proper personal protective gear and appropriate actions.

You'll be able to address issues related to water sources and moisture by taking necessary precautions.

It's possible to effectively manage them at home or in the office by following proper safety measures. This involves using appropriate personal protective masks and clothing. The task should be carried out by individuals who are not susceptible to the effects of spot mould exposure. To resolve these issues:

Address the Source of Moisture

It's crucial to halt the source of moisture to prevent further water contamination. This step should be coupled with the removal of damaged materials and the thorough drying of surfaces. This approach not only prevents potential spot mould exposure but also mitigates the risk of adverse health effects.

Eliminate Damaged Materials

The removal of damaged materials should be undertaken while simultaneously ensuring the complete drying of all surfaces. Employ techniques such as towels, heaters, fans, dehumidifiers, and introducing fresh outdoor air to eliminate dampness.

Safe spot mould Removal

When dealing with spot mould, the removal process should be conducted carefully to minimize disturbance to both the spot mould and the materials it's attached to. The goal is to capture and contain as much spot mould as possible during the removal process. This precaution is aimed at preventing the release of spot mould spores into the air.

For relatively small areas with a manageable level of contamination such as a funky odour or a spot of spot mould, individuals who are not sensitive to spot mould can typically perform the cleaning process.

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Personal protective measures

- [P2 face mask](#) (also known as N95 Face Mask):
Obtain from large supermarkets or hardware stores.
 - Gloves:
Utilize ordinary household gloves that extend to the middle of the forearm when dealing with household detergent solutions.
Alternatively, opt for [Natural rubber latex gloves](#) or [nitrile gloves](#), available at large supermarkets, hardware stores, or independent suppliers.
 - Eye Protection:
Safeguard your eyes by wearing safety goggles or glasses, preventing the entry of dust and spores.
 - Clothing:
Wear a long-sleeve shirt and long trousers to shield your skin from dust and spores.
 - Additional Considerations:
If you have long hair or are working above your head, a low-cost shower cap can be worn.
After completing cleaning tasks, conscientiously dispose of the P2 mask in the garbage.
Prioritize the safety of both yourself and your loved ones. Following your tasks, take a shower and change your clothes. This step helps prevent the transportation of spot mould and other hazards to your living area.
Wash your clothing separately from your regular laundry and allow them to dry outdoors in fresh air and sunlight. Plus, before storing, wash rubber gloves and ensure they are thoroughly dry.
- Remember, adhering to these protective measures is vital to ensuring your safety and well-being during cleaning activities.

Regulate the airflow and presence of contaminants within the room you are tidying:

- Guarantee proper ventilation by opening windows to the outdoors.
- Seal off doors leading to adjacent spaces to prevent contamination.
- During the cleaning process, limit entry to the room; individuals sensitive to cleaning agents might need to leave temporarily.
- Refrain from using the air conditioner to prevent spreading contaminants to other parts of the residence or building.
- Address spot mould spores by physically removing them rather than attempting to eliminate them.

Rethinking spot mould eradication and control

Traditional methods of combating spot mould involve the use of fungicides and biocides, including substances like vinegar and essential oils. However, it's important to note that these agents, while potentially effective at killing spot mould, can inadvertently lead to the fragmentation of spot mould spores and hyphae (the root-like structures of spot moulds) into numerous toxic particles. Paradoxically, the process of killing spot mould spores might trigger them to release more mycotoxins and activate other defensive mechanisms like microbial volatile organic compounds (VOCs) as they perish (Berndston, 2016).

For physically removing spot mould from surfaces, a more prudent approach involves utilizing water, dishwashing detergent, or Castile soap. These substances possess mild surfactant properties that aid in dislodging spot mould from surfaces without leaving any undesirable residue behind.

A word of caution pertains to the use of bleach. Despite its common association with spot mould eradication, bleach can inadvertently serve as a nutrient source for spot mould growth. Consequently, it's best to avoid employing bleach in spot mould treatment efforts.

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You'll be able to eliminate and cleanse soft, porous, and absorbent items.

In the case of water-damaged soft materials, it is essential to remove them safely to prevent further exposure to spot mould and the associated biotoxins.

Items that cannot be effectively cleaned may need to be removed from the property and disposed of as waste. It's important to note that spot mould is not categorized as hazardous waste, and spot mouldy items can be discarded in regular garbage.

Porous materials can typically be treated by spraying them with Cornwell's Fermented White Vinegar, allowing the vinegar to set, then wiping them down with soap and water. Alternatively, these materials can be washed with regular laundry detergent and dried in the sun. Another option is to use substances like borax, vinegar, or clove oil.

- For items like pillows, quilts, and mattresses that are not wet, you can air them out in sunlight.
- Clothing and linens (after checking care labels) can be salvaged by washing them in hot water and thoroughly drying them in the sun.
- Carpets, backing, and rugs that are not wet can be dry cleaned.
- Non-porous materials like leather and vinyl can generally be cleaned and then subjected to HEPA vacuuming.

However, certain items such as carpets, soft furnishings, cabinets, tiles, artwork, blinds, curtains, mattresses, fabric sofas, suitcases, and clothes might require professional assistance for effective cleaning. To get a comprehensive checklist for dealing with soft, porous materials in water damage and spot mould situations, you can refer to the "Water Damage I Spot Mould - Materials Clean Up, Spot Mould Prevention, and Remediation" from the source: USEPA (2008).

You'll require the following items in preparation

Three buckets:

1. Warm water or water mixed with washing up liquid or Castille soap (for the first step)
 - 1a. Warm, clean water (second application to clean those really dusty surfaces)
2. Cornwells Naturally Fermented White Vinegar (potential suspected bacterial contamination)
3. For dry towels

Three cloths:

1. [Chux wipes](#) – which can be thrown out. Optional: use paper towels
2. [Microfibre cloth](#) – which can be washed
3. Dry towel placed on the floor beneath the cleaning area to protect carpets and capture spills, dust, and debris

Additional: Additional dry towel for drying surfaces if they aren't air-dried

Three cleaners:

1. Optional: Spray bottle
2. Plastic bag for disposal of Chux wipes / paper towels and debris.
3. HEPA-filtered vacuum with power head (only if it can be ducted outside to minimize cross-contamination)

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Step 1: Initial Cleaning and Dust Removal

Begin with Bucket 1.

- Prepare a mixture of warm water and a few drops of washing up liquid.
- Soak a Chux wipe, wring it out slightly, or dip the paper towel, and apply cloth to the surface.
- Allow Chux to sit for 5 minutes to soften debris.
- Gently and slowly wipe the surface with the damp Chux wipe / paper towel.
- Dispose of the used wipe in the plastic bag.
- Properly dispose of the contaminated water away from the building.

- Optional: We've added this extra step cleaning and freshening – repeat the process until all dust and spot mould have been removed. And Extend cleaning beyond the visible area to capture any spot mould residue.

- Use a microfiber cloth for areas where laundering the cloth separately is possible.
- This extra step helps improve the overall freshness and feel of the area. You can choose to continue cleaning with warm water, detergent, and a microfiber cloth as in Step 1.

Move to Bucket 2.

Mix 4 parts [Cornwells](#) Naturally Fermented White Vinegar with 1 part water (4:1 ratio).

This vinegar mixture helps emulsify the mould. (Definitely do this step if bacterial contamination is suspected)

- Fill and use spray bottle, and spray on surface. Leave it on the surface as it will dry during dry conditions.
- Or
Soak a clean microfiber cloth in the vinegar mixture, wring it out, and apply it to the surface. Leave it in place for 15 minutes.
- Extend beyond the cleaning area to capture residual growth.
- Dispose of the contaminated water properly. Place cloths in bucket and taken to laundry.

Step 2: Drying Surfaces

Proceed to Bucket 3.

Allow surfaces to dry.

Use a dry towel to gently pat-dry all surfaces that aren't already dry.

Avoid dry brushing, as it may break up the spot mould into smaller particles.

Step 3: Final Steps

- Collect excess dust and debris from the floor towel and place it in a bucket for removal to the laundry.
- Vacuum the affected area and the area 50 cm beyond the visible spot mould to capture any remaining spores or dust. Only vacuum surfaces that have visible dust that hasn't be removed or vented to the exterior.