



Chicago Spring Mold Checklist

FREEZE-THAW · SPRING STORMS · SEWER BACKUPS

Lake-effect storms, freeze-thaw cycles, and Chicago's 100-year-old combined sewer system make spring our toughest mold season. Mold begins growing on wet materials in as little as **24 to 48 hours** (EPA/CDC). This checklist helps you stay ahead of it.

BEFORE THE NEXT BIG STORM — PREPARE

- **Install a sewer backflow valve.** The City of Chicago offers cost-share programs for qualifying homeowners on combined sewers.
- **Test your sump pump and add a battery backup.** Power outages during storms are when basements flood.
- **Extend downspouts 4–6 feet from the foundation** and confirm soil grade slopes away from the house.
- **Seal visible foundation and mortar cracks.** Spring freeze-thaw cycles widen them fast.
- **Run a basement dehumidifier** through spring and summer. Target **30–50% relative humidity** (EPA).
- **Inspect your roof, chimney flashing, and attic** after each major storm — spring rain loves old flashing.

FIRST 48 HOURS AFTER WATER INTRUSION — THE MOLD CLOCK

- **Document everything** with photos and video before you move anything. Insurance will need it.
- **Remove standing water immediately.** Wet/dry shop vac, sump pump, or professional water extraction.
- **Pull up saturated carpet and padding.** Padding almost never dries out — replace it.
- **Remove wet drywall and insulation.** Anything wet more than 24 hours rarely dries in place.
- **Run commercial dehumidifiers and fans.** Keep doors open, maximize airflow.
- **Don't seal wet materials behind new drywall.** The #1 cause of hidden mold we find in Chicago homes.

IF A SEWER BACKUP WAS INVOLVED — EXTRA STEPS

- **Treat all affected materials as Category 3 (black water).** Porous materials touched by sewage must be removed — not just dried.
- **Disinfect all non-porous surfaces** (concrete, tile, metal) after water is removed.
- **Have HVAC ducts inspected** if water reached any return or basement mechanical area.
- **Call your insurance carrier.** Verify whether sewer backup coverage is included on your policy.

CALL A CERTIFIED REMEDIATOR IF YOU SEE:

- Musty or “earthy” smell, especially near floor drains or finished basement walls
- Black, green, or brown discoloration on walls, ceilings, or baseboards
- Peeling paint, bubbling drywall, or warped flooring
- Worsening allergy, asthma, or respiratory symptoms indoors
- Any water intrusion in the last 6–12 months — even if it “dried out”

FREE MOLD INSPECTION FOR CHICAGO HOMEOWNERS

Call 815-469-8877 • yourmoldsolutions.com

Mold Solutions | Certified Mold Remediation | Serving Greater Chicagoland

Sources: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Mold; City of Chicago Department of Water Management. This checklist is informational and does not replace professional inspection.