TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-MLD · Mould, Damp and Sewage Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Maintenance, cleaning, plumbing, building, housing, care and council workers who deal with mould, sewage or flood clean-up · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

For anyone who works in damp or flood-affected buildings, cleans up mould or deals with sewage: what mould and sewage can do to health, the other hazards of wet buildings, and the controls from fixing the water to gloves, masks and handwashing.

Damp buildings grow mould, and leaks, blockages and floods bring sewage into places people work. Mould can irritate the eyes, nose, throat and skin and set off allergies and asthma. Sewage and floodwater carry germs that cause stomach, skin and other infections. People with asthma, lung conditions or weakened immunity are most at risk. Wet buildings also hide electrical, structural and asbestos hazards.

This talk covers the health effects in general terms, the hazards of wet buildings, and the controls: fixing the water first, leaving large or contaminated jobs to specialists, not stirring mould up, never mixing cleaning chemicals, PPE, handwashing and covering cuts. It is awareness, not mould remediation, sewage clean-up or flood restoration training.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain how mould, damp and sewage can affect health: irritation, allergy and asthma from mould, and infections from sewage and floodwater
- Know who is most at risk, and that anyone with asthma, a lung condition or weakened immunity can talk to their supervisor and doctor
- Recognise the other hazards of wet and flood-affected buildings: electricity, structural damage, asbestos, chemicals and slips
- Use the controls: fix the water first, contain and wet rather than dry brush, ventilate, and never mix cleaning chemicals
- Wear PPE suited to the job, follow hygiene rules, wash your hands, cover cuts and keep dirty clothes and gear away from clean areas
- Know when a job is too big or too contaminated for you, and report leaks, mould, sewage spills and symptoms

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What it covers

Module	Covers
Why it matters	Mould and health; Sewage, floodwater and infection; Other hazards in wet buildings
Controls that work	Fix the water first; Contain, wet and ventilate; PPE and hygiene
Your part	Know when to stop and get help; Wash, cover and change; Report it

Activities

- Spot the risk: workers look at four jobs, from wiping mould off a bathroom ceiling to clearing a blocked sewer drain, and decide what the hazards are and how to control them
- What would you do: workers decide what to do in four situations, from returning to a flooded building with the power still on to a workmate with a cut hand during a sewage clean-up

What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Does it say how much mould a worker can clean up on their own? No, on purpose. When a job needs a specialist depends on the size of the area, the material, the cause of the damp, whether sewage or floodwater is involved, and the people who use the building, and guidance differs between places. The talk teaches workers to

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stop and ask when a job is large, contaminated or in doubt. Add your own procedure, the jobs your workers may do, and your health authority's guidance.

Is it suitable after a flood? Yes, as a briefing before clean-up work starts. It covers the hazards of flood-affected buildings, such as electricity, damaged structures, asbestos in older buildings, contaminated water and fuel-powered pumps indoors, in general terms. It does not replace the advice of your health authority, emergency services or a licensed electrician, or a specialist restoration contractor for large jobs.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Mould, Damp and Sewage Awareness

What mould, damp and sewage can do, and how to work safely around them

20–30 minutes · Maintenance, cleaning, plumbing, building, housing, care and council workers who deal with mould, sewage or flood clean-up

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

MLD

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ Mould, sewage and health
- ✓ Hazards in wet buildings
- ✓ Controls and PPE
- ✓ Hygiene and when to stop

This talk is not

- ✕ Mould remediation training
- ✕ Sewage or flood restoration
- ✕ Electrical or asbestos work
- ✕ Our procedure: **[Our mould and sewage procedure]**

Awareness only. Remediation is specialist work. Electrical, plumbing and asbestos work need the right licence.

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Mould, sewage and your health

Mould and sewage can make people sick. Some people are more at risk.

- Mould: sore eyes, runny nose, cough, skin rash
- Mould: can set off allergies and asthma
- Sewage and floodwater: stomach and skin infections
- Through the mouth, cuts, eyes and splashes
- More at risk: asthma, lung conditions, weakened immunity

A composite example

- A maintenance worker scrubs a mouldy storeroom ceiling with a dry brush, no mask, in a closed room.
- That night her asthma flares badly. The leak above the ceiling is still dripping.

Fix the water first. Do not stir it up.

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Duties under health and safety laws

The business must

- Find and fix leaks and damp
- Plan mould and sewage jobs safely
- Use specialists for large or contaminated jobs
- Provide PPE, washing facilities and training

You must

- Follow the procedure and wear the PPE
- Stop when a job is beyond you
- Wash, cover cuts and keep gear clean
- Report leaks, mould, spills and symptoms

Most health and safety laws give these duties. Check the law where you work (in Australia, WHS or OHS laws).

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The order of controls for mould and sewage



HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

Cleaning mould without fixing the water is a repeat job.

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Participant handout · keep this

Mould and sewage can make people sick, and wet buildings hide other hazards. Keep this page.

The order of controls

1. Fix the leak, blockage or damp
2. Remove badly affected materials
3. Close off the area; keep others out
4. Ventilate, dry, wet methods
5. Procedure, specialists, hygiene
6. Gloves, boots, eye protection, respirator, last

Never

- ■ Dry brush, sand or blow mould
- ■ Mix cleaning chemicals

Wet buildings

- ■ Electrics, structure, asbestos checked first
- ■ No fuel-powered pumps indoors

Before you start

- ☐ Has the source of the water been found and fixed?
- ☐ Is the power safe, and has the building been checked?
- ☐ Could there be asbestos in this building?
- ☐ Is this job small and clean enough for me, or does it need a specialist?
- ☐ Do I have the right PPE, and somewhere to wash?

Hygiene

- ■ Wash hands before eating, drinking, smoking
- ■ Cover cuts; keep dirty gear separate

Who and how

- ■ **[Our mould and sewage procedure]**
- ■ **[Who to report to here]**

Fix the water first. Do not stir it up. Gloves on, hands washed.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not mould remediation, sewage clean-up or flood restoration training.

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