



In This Issue...The Newest “Four Letter Word” – Part 1

A few years ago property owners were hit with an unanticipated and very unwelcome surprise called asbestos. The roofing industry had to deal with it too, because asbestos was often used in roofing felts and flashings on built up roofs. Reroofing costs on roofs containing asbestos soared. Fortunately, the regulatory requirements for handling asbestos on roofs have become more reasonable and asbestos is not the problem it once was.

There is a new problem in the industry that may prove to be just as expensive to deal with as asbestos. The newest “four letter word” is mold.

Like asbestos, mold creates health related problems. Unlike asbestos, which is generally harmless unless you disturb it, mold comes to you when the environment to support it is right. What this all means to you is that when your roof leaks, especially continually, even with small leaks, you are creating a breeding ground for mold. Most organizations are already aware of the general issues concerning mold. What we want to do over the next several issues is to outline some of the important issues concerning mold that are roofing related. In this issue we will focus on some things that we think may surprise you.

Added Perspective

(1) The first issue that may surprise you is that you may very well know more about mold than your roofing contractor does. In our industry there are proactive roofers and there are reactive roofers. Most are reactive. Most know mold is “out there”, but most don’t worry about it much and won’t until it hits them in their pocketbook. So, don’t assume that your roofer will automatically look out for you.

(2) The second thing that we think you may not be aware of is that those roofers who are knowledgeable don’t like mold any better than you do. While it is true that the possibility exists that some buildings will be reroofed “prematurely” because of mold related issues and organizations are going to need to be more aggressive about addressing minor leak problems, both of which would bring more work to roofers, it is also true that a roofer’s liability is going to increase. Some roofers are discovering that their insurance companies are eliminating liability coverage for mold related claims from policies!

(3) The third issue that we think is important is that once some big lawsuits over mold issues occur there will begin to be a more intense focus on keeping roofs watertight to insure that they don’t leak prematurely. This will undoubtedly lead to organizations spending less money on their roofs in the long run. Most building owners do not spend nearly enough money on preventative maintenance and that usually costs them more money in the long run. So, as concerns about mold causes an increased focus on preventative maintenance it will ultimately save organizations money by maximizing roof life.

In Part 2

In the next article we are going to review some of the basic issues surrounding mold and mold growth with a specific slant toward roofing related applications.