



“Breathe Easier with Desert Cities Indoor Air”

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In the State of California, there are strict regulations for asbestos and lead paint inspectors and remediators. But there are **no** licensing requirements for mold inspectors, mold remediators or mold labs. Unfortunately, this allows unqualified, non-licensed individuals to label themselves “mold inspectors” and mold labs and set up shop without oversight. Consumers are consequently left to fend for themselves.

Professional Standard of Care used by Desert Cities Indoor Air (DCIA) when inspecting buildings, workspaces and homes for mold.	Red Flags to consider when interviewing “mold inspectors”
DCIA is an independent expert working for homeowners, potential buyers and property managers. DCIA does not do mold remediation or analyze mold samples.	The company doing the mold inspection also does the laboratory analysis, or worse yet , also performs the mold removal/remediation.
An American Board of Industrial Hygiene (ABIH) Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) will inspect the building and write the report. A Certification stamp with a number and expiration date will be on the report.	Non-certified individuals inspect the building and write the report. Does the website for the mold inspection company show you the credentials and name of the person doing the work?
The microbiology labs used by DCIA are accredited by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) EMLAP program, ¹ the gold standard in mold labs.	No AIHA ID # is listed for the mold lab. Lab reports should show lab location address, phone # and show a signature of the analyst or technical manager. Is the lab AIHA accredited?
Experienced, qualified consultants carry professional liability insurance of at least \$1,000,000.	Ask for proof that the mold inspector has Professional Liability Insurance coverage including a mold coverage rider.
The first step in an indoor air quality investigation is a visual water damage inspection. If there is no water damage, mold like odor or suspect mold growth, testing for mold may not be warranted.	The mold inspector insists that despite finding no water damage, mold like odor or suspect mold growth , that air sampling at an additional cost is mandatory. One price does not fit all!
If visible mold growth is present, the property owner may clean it up or cut out water damaged building materials when the affected amount of damage is 10 square feet (sq. ft.) or less. ²	The mold inspector insists that small areas of water damage (less than 10 sq. ft.) require opening up walls by a mold remediation company under containment.
Visible mold growth must be removed. It is not always necessary to test the mold to find out what mold species may be present. ³	The mold inspector insists that samples be collected and analyzed. This goes against EPA recommendations.

¹ List of American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) accredited Environmental Microbiology Laboratory Accreditation Program (EMLAP): http://apps.aiha.org/qms_aiha/public/pages/reports/publicScopeView.aspx?ProgramCode=38&Version=2

² <http://www.epa.gov/mold/pdfs/moldguide.pdf> page 4.

³ EPA Mold Guide page 13.

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Certain mold species are indicative of long term water intrusion (<i>Stachybotrys</i> and <i>Penicillium/Aspergillus</i> species) versus “housekeeping” (<i>Cladosporium</i> species) or lumberyard mold (<i>Ophiostoma</i> species). DCIA never uses the term “toxic mold.”	The mold inspector non-specific terms such as “toxic” or “black mold” to support recommendations. “Toxic” is a vague term that is generally used by someone as a scare tactic.
If air samples are desired by the client, a sufficient number of air samples indoors and outdoors must be collected. At a minimum, two outdoors and two indoors because of the wide variation of naturally occurring mold spores.	An insufficient number of samples are collected. Comparing one outdoor sample to one or two indoor samples can be inconclusive and occasionally misleading. ⁴
“Significantly different” air sampling results occur when indoor samples are an order of magnitude, or more, greater when compared to the outdoor samples.	Air sampling data from areas called out as “infested” or “contaminated” are not an order of magnitude different from areas deemed “normal” or “acceptable” areas.
DCIA and the EPA do not support routine cleaning of air ducts. ⁵ Only certain specific situations call for cleaning or replacement of ductwork.	Mold inspector recommends air duct cleaning for no specific reason or documentation that the interior of the air ducts are actually contaminated with mold growth.
Prior to opening up walls and flooring, the property owner must be advised to consider whether asbestos or lead could be present in the disturbed materials. When disturbing more than 100 sq. ft. of building material in a pre-1980 home, an asbestos inspection is required. ⁶ Lead based paint should also be assessed in pre-1978 buildings.	Mold inspector recommends opening up walls or otherwise disturbing building materials in older buildings without warning of a potential asbestos or lead hazard. Contractors insisting on asbestos and/or lead testing in new construction may be trying to increase your bill and will most likely result in negative findings.
At DCIA you get a Certified Industrial Hygienist, not a “mold inspector.” CIHs maintain high standards of integrity and professional conduct; accept responsibility for their actions; continually seek to enhance their professional capabilities; have mandatory ongoing continuing education classes and recertification every 5 years; practice with fairness and honesty; and, encourage others to act in a professional manner consistent with the certification standards and responsibilities set forth in their Code of Ethics. ⁷	Ask the “mold inspector” about his/her “certification” and Code of Ethics and continuing education. There are dozens of “mold inspector” titles being used in California with varying degrees of meaning. Some titles are available for purchase on the Internet with no examination or proof of education or experience. Unfortunately, “Let the Buyer Beware” and “you get what you pay for” are the rules of this business until the state of California decides to step in.

RESOURCES:

We hope this information bulletin is useful to you. We are available to help with any concerns you may have. Please call Susan Browne Rosenberg at 760-902-2545 if you have questions or need an expert inspection. Visit our website at <http://www.dcindoorair.com/> and “Like Us” on Facebook.

⁴ ACGIH TLV book on Biologically Derived Airborne Contaminants www.acgih.org page 219 “Introduction to the Biologically Derived Airborne contaminants.”

⁵ EPA document on Air Duct Cleaning. <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/should-you-have-air-ducts-your-home-cleaned>

⁶ http://www.cslb.ca.gov/About_Us/Library/Licensing_Classifications/ASB_-_Asbestos_Certification.aspx

⁷ <http://www.abih.org/ethics>