

# **PARK VILLAS NORTH HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**

## **MOLD AND MILDEW POLICY**

(October, 2004)

Naturally occurring mold and mildew are found virtually everywhere in our environment – both indoors and outdoors. However, climate and other environmental and hygienic conditions can lead to the excessive growth of mold and mildew. These microorganisms may begin to proliferate inside any condominium unit for a number of reasons, the most common being excess moisture. Excessive mold can damage the structure of our homes and personal property or make some people feel sick. Although prevention of excessive mold growth may be relatively easy, the cost and disturbance to address major mold or mildew damage can be extreme, and directly impacts the costs associated to keep Park Villas North as our homes.

Some indicators of mold and mildew growth may include:

- Evidence of mold or mildew that cannot be removed by simple cleaning as described in the last paragraph below.
- Evidence of an ongoing water leak or excessive moisture in a unit or in the common area.
- Any water accumulation, including leaks or overflows from showers, tubs, toilets, sinks, dehumidifiers, refrigerator, air conditioners or sweating windows, pipes, and toilet tanks.
- Walls that are soft and spongy and give to the touch.

In order to prevent and, when necessary, to remediate mold and mildew issues, the Park Villas North Homeowners Association has developed a policy designed to (1) clarify each owner's personal responsibility to maintain their own unit and prevent damage to the property of others or the "common area"; (2) establish a simple procedure by which owners and the Association's management can review and address mold or moisture problems as they occur. We each have separate responsibilities to keep our homes and community in good shape, and we each have the right to benefit from the strength of our Association to address large-scale problems. Please review this policy document, and your own home, in regard to moisture-related damage.

### **PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF YOU FIND EXCESSIVE MOISTURE IN YOUR HOME:**

1. If you find excessive moisture or water damage in your home, try to determine the source of the moisture. Is there a leak in a pipe, toilet, or window? If the source of moisture can be found, address it, either by repairing it yourself or by contacting the Association's Community Management Firm if you think the problem comes from outside your unit or area of responsibility to repair. Of course, if you think moisture is coming from a neighboring unit or if your moisture problem is infiltrating your neighbors unit, go to the owners of that unit and talk about it. Work together with your neighbors to keep your homes in good repair. Conditions causing mold (such as water leaks, condensation and flooding) should be corrected immediately

upon discovery. Water-damaged areas should be dried within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.

Remember: our responsibilities to maintain our own homes are reasonable. They're written down in the Park Villas North Rules and Regulations. **Each owner is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the interior of their unit, its windows, screens and doors, and for the upkeep of all areas for which they have the exclusive right to use. Owners are also responsible for all "installations", such as built-ins, stoves, dishwashers, refrigerators, ice makers and plumbing, (everything that protrudes from plastered walls and concrete floors, including but not limited to angle stops, sinks, pipes to sinks, showers which are either standing units and/or tiled walls, shower drains, floor tile, toilets, toilet seals, etc.), including any water damage from such items and for the upkeep and maintenance of these items. Each owner is responsible for the electrical, heating and air conditioning systems in their home, and for the upkeep, maintenance and repairs thereof. Each owner must, at their own expense, maintain and repair and follow all guidelines to prevent water damage and/or the growth of mold and mildew in their unit.**

2. Park Villas North has a program to assist owners and the Association, in the event you believe you have excessive growth of mold and mildew in your home. If you find such moisture or mold, please contact the Community Manager immediately. Our Community Manager will come and inspect your home with you and if you agree there is evidence of mold and mildew damage beyond that which can be simply cleaned in your home, you may request a "Formal Assessment" of the moisture issues.

Park Villas North has developed a contact with reputable contractors that have been familiarized with our community, are specialized in investigation of moisture-related damage and can include "certified industrial hygienists" (which are the people qualified to test for mold and develop remediation plans, if needed). In order to have a "Formal Assessment" of your home, you will be required to deposit \$250.00 with the Community Manager, who will contact and schedule the Association's contractor to inspect your home. If the source of moisture/water is within the Association's maintenance responsibility, your deposit will be refunded. Otherwise, the deposit is applied to the fee charged by the contractor(s).

The experts retained by the Association to assess your unit will try to determine: (1) whether or not there is excessive mold or mildew in the unit; and (2) whose responsibility it is to correct the problem (an Owner, the Association or some combination). This determination will be made by determining the source of the moisture, the division of maintenance responsibilities described in our CC&R's and a review by the Board of Directors. A copy of the contractor's report regarding your home will be provided to you. The contractor may also provide recommendations for repair, or for further assessment in order to define the "scope of repair" (some repairs can be extensive).

-- If it is determined that mold and mildew is present in the unit and that the Owner is responsible for remediating the problem, then the \$250 deposit will be used to pay for the initial assessment. The unit owner will be required to remediate the matter and to verify completion of repairs that may affect the common area.

-- If it is determined that mold and mildew is present in the unit and that the Association is responsible for remediating the problem, then the Owner's deposit will be returned and the initial assessment and the cost of remediation will be paid by the Association.

-- In the event that one home's moisture problem has affected other homes and/or the Common Area, the Board of Directors will work with all the Owners in question to develop a plan of responsibility for repairs and costs. Please remember, if a leak in your home causes damage to the common area or to another Owner's unit, you may be held responsible for the costs of remediation! If you have tenants, you are still responsible to ensure your unit is properly maintained and in good repair. Owners who by their own, or their tenants', negligence allow the growth of excessive mold and mildew in their unit will be cited for violation of the Rules and Regulations and fined accordingly. The amount of any fines charged to any Owner shall be independent of any amount incurred for repairs caused by mold and mildew remediation.

#### **PREVENTION OF EXCESSIVE MOISTURE OR MOLD IN YOUR HOME.**

To avoid potential problems from the excessive growth of mold and mildew and other microorganisms, Owners should take steps to prevent moisture build-up in their unit. By following the simple guidelines listed below, Owners will dramatically reduce the likelihood of mold and mildew problems developing in their unit.

1. Open windows and window coverings frequently to allow proper air ventilation and permit the introduction of sunlight into your unit.
2. Move furniture and drapes from blocking air circulation.
3. Maintain a moderate temperature within your unit. Avoid extreme differences between indoor and outdoor air temperature that would cause windows and walls to show wetness on the inside surfaces.
4. Wipe down and dry areas that accumulate moisture, like countertops, windows and windowsills.
5. Run the exhaust fans in your kitchen when cooking or while running the dishwasher and allow the fan to run until all excess moisture has vented from the kitchen.
6. Use the pre-installed bathroom fan when showering or bathing and allow the fan to run until all excess moisture has vented from the bathroom. Keep the bathroom door closed when showering or bathing: the exhaust fans are only designed to vent an area the size of your bathroom.
7. Dry excess moisture that has gathered on bathroom fixtures, walls and other surfaces. Hang wet towels, shower mats, and rugs so they can air out and dry.
8. Take up rubber shower and tub mats and wash under-side regularly.

9. Make sure all tile is properly caulked and sealed.
10. Do not overfill closets or storage areas (like under bathroom and kitchen sinks).
11. Allow closets to ventilate with fresh air. Hang clothes loosely so that air can circulate around them.
12. Do not allow damp or moist stacks of clothes or other damp materials to lie in piles for an extended period of time.
13. Dry out mops, rags, and sponges thoroughly before storing inside a closet.
14. Dry all wet clothing before putting in the closet or clothes hamper.
15. Limit houseplants to a reasonable number. Excessive watering can generate large amounts of moisture.

#### **CLEANING MOLD FROM SMALL AREAS**

To clean a small area where mold has grown on a hard surface like bathroom or kitchen tiles or enamel-painted wood, walls, or ceilings the Federal Environmental Protection Agency recommends that you first clean the area with soap (or detergent) and water, let the surface dry and within 24 hours apply a spray-on household biocide, such as Lysol Disinfectant, Tilex Mildew Remover, or Clorox Cleaner. Make sure you follow the instructions on the label. Do not apply biocides to visible mold that may have grown on porous surfaces such as drywall or walls and ceilings or to large areas of a non-porous surface where mold is visible. If mold and mildew persist, notify the Community Manager immediately.