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Department Policy

FROM: Kathy Arnett, Director of Planning, Zoning and Economic Development *KA*
RE: Department Policy on How Complaints of Mold in Homes will be Handled
DATE: December 5, 2014

Recently, there have been a number of calls to City Hall regarding the presence of mold inside residential rental properties. In an effort to address these concerns, this Department is establishing this Policy on how the City will address these issues. It is important to note, this Policy is in-line with the recommendations of the Missouri Department of Health.

First of all, there are about 150,000 types of molds. Department staff are not environmental experts and will not determine the type of mold or its potential impacts for a resident. If a resident has serious concerns regarding his/her indoor environment and his/her health, he/she should contact an environmental expert with experience in the treatment of mold and, if necessary, consult a health care provider for diagnosis and treatment. The City will not make recommendations for the actions the homeowner should seek.

Since mold occurs naturally, in both the indoor and outdoor environment, the presence of mold is not uncommon. Residents have a responsibility to take steps to reduce the environment which breeds mold. As the State Department of Health notes, "Control the Moisture, Control the Mold." Residents of Manchester, including those who rent their property, need to do their part in reducing the opportunity for mold indoors. In addition, renters should consult the Missouri Landlord-Tenant Law to understand their rights.

If a resident calls with concerns regarding mold in a rental unit, the following steps (taken from MO Department of Health) will be followed by City staff:

1. The resident should fix the problem themselves, if possible. There is information on the State's website on how to cleanup mold. <http://health.mo.gov/living/environment/indoorair/mold.php>
2. If the problem is something that has to be fixed by the landlord, the resident must send a letter in writing to their landlord describing the nature of the complaint and keep a copy of the letter. If the resident's doctor made specific recommendations regarding their living environment, those should be included.
3. If the landlord refuses to address the issue, residents may then contact the City of Manchester Department of Planning & Zoning. The City cannot address mold, because mold itself is not a code violation; however, we can assist in correcting the cause of the mold if it is from a code violation, i.e. – missing roof shingles causing a roof leak. The resident will need to provide the following to the City:
 - a. History of issue, including dates and personal remediation efforts;
 - b. Steps taken to further prevent the spread of mold;
 - c. Correspondence to the landlord, as listed in Step 2 above, as well as return correspondence from the landlord noting a lack of intent to address the issue; and
 - d. Specific code violations that exist which are leading to the mold.
4. If a code violation does not exist, the resident may consider contacting an attorney or discussing the option of moving to a different unit with the landlord.

More information on mold can be found on the State of Missouri Department of Health's website:
<http://health.mo.gov/living/environment/indoorair/mold.php>