

Mold and Moisture Intrusion Are Focus of NCARB's New HSW Monograph

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NCARB's Professional Development Program is pleased to introduce its newest monograph, *Mold and Moisture Prevention*, which will be available in early summer 2005. *Mold* joins such recently published titles as *Building Envelope*, *Getting to Smart Growth*, and *Improving Building Performance*. It investigates air- and vapor-borne moisture problems that often lead to building failure in new construction.

J. David Odom, a senior building forensics consultant with Liberty Building Diagnostics Group, and his co-authors—George DuBose, Richard Scott, and Norman Nelson—focus on key issues in the decision-making process that can help owners, designers, and contractors avoid such problems.

WHAT'S BEHIND MOLD- AND MOISTURE-RELATED BUILDING FAILURE?

Despite the presence of improved technology, increased training opportunities, and more sophisticated building systems, moisture and mold problems continue to affect new buildings. The authors identify an integral problem: “[D]esign professionals entrusted with how buildings perform are not receiving adequate feedback on the performance of their previous buildings.”

This lack of performance feedback could be remedied by expert building commissioning. Such commissioning is most useful during the design phase and comprises three steps:

- the drafting and distribution of specific written design and construction

guidelines that go beyond traditional performance language, which is often vague and ineffective;

- the use of periodic peer reviews throughout design and construction as a means to compare the structure to original design and construction guidelines; and
- the implementation of appropriate startup techniques for building systems (including HVAC systems and building envelope components). The monograph explains, “This should include detailed pressure mapping of the building to confirm that it is properly balanced; extensive monitoring of environmental conditions and moisture levels during the first year of operation; and water spray testing of key envelope components . . .” (4).

WHAT TO EXPECT

Most of the information presented in NCARB's new *Mold* monograph focuses on preventing moisture intrusion and mold problems in hot, humid, and rainy climates. (Other regions and climates are discussed but not in significant detail.) The monograph is primarily geared toward the design and construction of commercial buildings. *Mold* does not investigate plumbing leaks and groundwater intrusion because “[i]n our experience, those problems are usually more easily identified and resolved” (6).

The authors also note, “No single document can address all the issues related to moisture intrusion and mold growth. However,

we believe this monograph addresses a significant proportion of the problems that architects will encounter in the design and construction of a typical commercial building.”

Beyond its introductory chapter, the monograph is divided into eight sections that are organized by design and construction phase rather than by topic. Chapter headings include “Schematic Design,” “Design Development,” “Construction,” “Building and System Conditioning,” “Post-construction Startup and System Commissioning,” and “Mold Assessment and Remediation.”

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