- Make sure companies are registered to do business in New York State. Even if you are not using a licensed home improvement contractor, the business must still be registered with the New York State Secretary of State.

  New York State Secretary of State
  (518) 473-2492 or www.dos.ny.gov/corps/bus_entity_search.html

- Get proof of insurance from your contractor. If a worker is injured, or damage is caused on your property, you could be held liable if your contractor does not have the required insurance.

- Find out if there have been any complaints lodged against the contractor or business by contacting all of the agencies listed above. In addition you can contact the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org

- Obtain a written contract for all work to be done and costs to be incurred. New York state law requires a “home improvement contractor” to provide a written contract for home improvement work specifying the scope of the work to be performed, the cost, a notice that the consumer may cancel the contract within three business days as well as other mandatory disclosures.

- Get references and check them. Ask friends and neighbors. Get references from the contractor and speak directly to former customers. Check for complaints with the Better Business Bureau.

- Ask for all Material Safety Data Sheets. These will give you important information about any chemicals they plan to use.

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**RESOURCES**

- New York State Office of the Attorney General
  www.ag.ny.gov
  http://www.nyknowyourcontractor.com/cfmqstaticdocs/home_improvement.html
  800-771-7755

  U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  “A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home”
  http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/
  888-283-7626

- New York State Department of Health
  “Information about Mold”
  800-458-1158 (ext. 27800) or 518 402-7800

- NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
  Report: “Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments”
  Fact Sheet: “Facts about Mold”
  212-442-3372 or 212-788-4290

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
  National Center for Environmental Health
  Fact Sheets: “Facts about Mold and Dampness”, “Protect Yourself from Mold”, “Get Rid of Mold”
  800-232-4636 http://www.cdc.gov/mold

- Cornell University College of Human Ecology
  “Hiring a Mold Remediation Contractor”
  http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/EDEN/Mold-remediation.pdf

- American Industrial Hygiene Association
  “The Facts about Mold”
  http://222.aiha.org

- Hands On Network
  “The Effectiveness of Mold Treatments on the Post Katrina Gulf Coast”
**Commonly Used Cleaning Methods**

There are no industry standards or consensus about any particular method to clean mold. Most frequently, it is recommended that the mold be removed by grinding and scraping with a stiff brush, then vacuuming with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum, followed by one of the following:

- Wiping with a detergent solution;
- Wiping with a bleach solution;
- Sealing with a borate solution (requires certified pesticide applicator);
- Sealing with another type of primer, such as a latex paint.

**With All Methods, Follow These Guidelines**

Use the gentlest cleaning method that effectively removes the mold. A large percentage of mold can be removed using a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter. Disinfectants are seldom needed to perform an effective remediation (unless there is also a sewage problem). The use of gaseous, vapor-phase, or aerosolized (e.g. fogging) biocides are not usually recommended by environmental or public health agencies.

Follow label instructions when using cleaning materials, including proper protection and ventilation. If you choose to remediate without the assistance of a mold abatement expert, take precautions to protect yourself from exposure during cleaning by wearing respiratory protection, gloves and goggles.

**Make efforts to limit dust generation.**

Make sure that all materials are completely dry and visibly free from mold after remediation is completed and before beginning any rebuilding efforts. Give consideration to cleaning areas adjacent to visible mold to remove settled spores and mold fragments.

**Using a Mold Abatement Expert?**

There are no official state or local licenses or certifications specifically for mold abatement experts. However, all businesses in New York must be registered to do business in the state. The following information will assist you in checking the legitimacy and the complaint history of a company you are considering hiring:

- **Check licenses.** Companies that market themselves as “Home Improvement Contractors” must be licensed in New York City, Suffolk, Nassau, Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland counties, and in the City of Buffalo.

  New York City Department of Consumer Affairs “311” or www.nyc.gov/html/dca/html/licenses/license_check.shtml

  Nassau County Office of Consumer Affairs 516-571-2600 (press option 1) or www.nassaucountyny.gov/vendor_lookup

  Suffolk County Office of Consumer Affairs 631-853-4600 (press option 3) or www.suffolkcountyny.gov/consumeraffairs

  Westchester Dept. of Consumer Protection 914-995-2155 or www.consumer.westchestergov.com

  Putnam County Dept. of Consumer Protection 845-808-1617 or www.putnamcountyny.com/index.php/consumer-affairs/outstanding-violations


  City of Buffalo 716-851-4078 or 716-851-6594 or www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/Home/City_Departments/EDPIS/Licenses/LicensedContractors