

A Guide to Asthma Triggers and the Residential Rental Property Maintenance Code

For residents and property owners

The AIR Inspection is Based on the International Property Maintenance Code

When the Multnomah County Environmental Home Inspector performs an AIR inspection, he or she is looking for conformance to the Multnomah County Residential Rental Property Maintenance Code, as well as several other housing-related asthma triggers. You can see copies of the Multnomah County Code and the International Property Maintenance Code on the AIR website: www.multco.us/AIR, under the "Property Owners" section.

What are asthma triggers that I can look for in my home?

Dust mites

Dust mites are too small to see but they are found in every home. Dust mites live in mattresses, pillows, carpets, fabric-covered furniture, bedcovers, clothes and stuffed toys.

Mold

Mold grows on damp materials. If mold is a problem in your home, clean up the mold and get rid of excess water or moisture. Lowering the moisture also helps reduce other triggers, such as dust mites and cockroaches.

Pests

Droppings or body parts of pests such as cockroaches or rodents can be asthma triggers due to allergies.

Extreme Temperatures

An ideal temperature for any person but especially people with asthma is one where it is neither too hot nor too cold. Cold, dry air can cause lungs to become inflamed. The more the lungs become constricted, the less air is able to get to them.

Are these triggers maintenance code violations? In a word, Yes!

Dust

Surfaces not being maintained in clean, sanitary manner (including damaged carpeting, excessive Dust, Dander, Dust Mite, Pollen accumulation) (IPMC 305.3)

Mold

- 1) Visible mold present (IPMC 305.3.1)
- 2) Inadequate ventilation for bathroom (IPMC 403.2)
- 3) Exhaust fans not vented to outside of building: Bath (IPMC 403.2)
- 4) Exhaust fans not vented to outside of building: Kitchen (IPMC 403.4)

Pests

Presence of insect and/or rodent infestation (IPMC 308.1)
Rodent entry (IPMC 304.5)

Extreme Temperatures

Heat source inadequate of maintaining year round temperature of 68° (IPMC 602.2)



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Are there asthma triggers that cannot be enforced by the Residential Rental Property Maintenance Code?

Sure. Cigarette smoke can trigger asthma attacks, and so can strong fragrances and odors from hazardous chemicals. The AIR inspector will look for these triggers in addition to the Rental Code Inspection.

How Can I Reduce Environmental Asthma Triggers on my Property?

How to Clean Up Mold: <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html>

How to Reduce Asthma Attacks from Second Hand Smoke:
http://www.epa.gov/smokefree/pdfs/trifold_brochure.pdf

How to Reduce Dust Mites: <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/dustmites.html>

How to Prevent and Get Rid of Cockroaches and Pests: <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pests.html>

Pets and Asthma: <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/pets.html>

How to Reduce Nitrogen Dioxide in the Home: <http://www.epa.gov/asthma/no2.html>

