CITY OF SAN MATEO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
CODE ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

330 W. 20th Avenue
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The City has adopted an updated approach to how mold in residential units is evaluated and enforced to ensure that units meet health and safety (habitability) requirements.

Enforcement Protocol
The City will enforce mold complaints when it is visible and found on surfaces that normally do not accumulate moisture. For example, if mold is visible in the living room or bedroom, the City will enforce it because ceilings and walls are not where moisture normally accumulates. However, if we see mold in a bathroom, we may not be able to enforce it, because this is where moisture accumulates normally. Another factor for enforcement is the amount of visible mold. If the presence of mold is determined to be minor, it may not constitute a health and safety issue that is enforceable. However, if the amount of mold is determined to be major, it would constitute a health and safety issue that does need to be enforced and addressed.

Mold Testing Reports
The City will follow the lead of the US Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Public Health in discouraging mold testing reports, and staff will not use such reports for enforcement purposes. For more information, please see https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/EHIB/CPE/Pages/Mold.aspx.

If a resident or property owner wants to order a mold report from an environmental company, they may do so at their own expense but without expectations that Code Enforcement would make a determination on enforcement based on its conclusions. Likewise, the City does not make judgments on how mold affects someone's health, and we cannot use doctors' notes in our enforcement.

Mold Sources
Code Enforcement staff will continue to address underlying causes of mold as they relate to the habitability of a residential unit. When there is evidence that moisture and mold are resulting from a defective roof, a plumbing leak, improper insulation, or other underlying conditions, staff will require a property owner to fix these conditions and remove the visible mold. The severity of the mold and extent of work necessary will guide the decision-making process for when tenant relocation is necessary. When tenant relocation is necessary to ensure the health and safety of the tenants, the property owner will be required to pay the relocations expenses per the City's Tenant Relocation Ordinance (Municipal Code Chapter 7.50).

Please contact the Code Enforcement Division for additional information about this topic.