



## **My prediction for the environmental industry: Mold - Hurricane Sandy - Changes**

April 22, 2013 - Spotlights

I am a 23 year environmental industry expert and principal of LEW Corporation. One important aspect of my job involves evaluating and anticipating how the environmental industry will change and in the past, many would say I have been very successful at that! Looking into the future, my first prediction is that Hurricane Sandy will change the way mold will be dealt with in the future in an enormous way. Second, insurance coverage for mold will become harder to obtain and if obtainable at all it will be sustainability more expensive. Third, toxic mold will be a hot topic on the news and in the media. Finally, mold will become highly litigated in real-estate transactions, rental properties, office environments and all other locations that mold will grow.

Mold is a part of nature. It needs only moisture to grow because its spores are, in theory, everywhere! Nobody can warranty, guarantee, or assure anyone that mold will not grow back. It's natural and part of our world! What a mold contractor could say is, "We can restore your property back to a pre-loss condition." Unfortunately, the reality is, too many Hurricane Sandy impacted properties had foreign fly-by-night hurricane chasers, also known as carpetbaggers, do mold remediation and demolition work and now have mold growing back.

Mold in the media and litigation is currently occurring and will continue to occur which will likely create a snowball effect for the blame game. To re-coup the economic losses, some will have no choice but to sue someone and numerous others will follow suit (file suite). With the increase of mold litigation, the cost of insurance will definitively rise, if insurable at all and the pressure will most likely sway government to create environmental mold regulations, in some form. The unfortunate rise in environmental mold litigation due to Hurricane Sandy losses and the frustration of the impacted property occupants, coupled with the potentially toxic health hazards associated with mold, will be cause for mold related litigation (precedence) and media to migrate into all other mold related environments. Some of these related environments include apartment living, real-estate transactions due diligence, in the office and at a school. After 23 years as a northeast major player and industry expert, I cannot remember an environmental issue that once the legal system got involved and litigation started occurring it suddenly went away!

So what should you consider doing to minimize being exposed to unnecessary potentially toxic mold and expensive litigation? It's called "Environmental Mold Risk Management." It might sound like smoke and mirrors, but a simple to follow and achievable Environmental Mold Risk Management plan will minimize all of the negatives associated with my predictions. Whether new construction, renovation or in light of my prediction, now is a great time to institute an "Environmental Mold Risk Management plan." If you agree with the rationale for my predictions above, then I would hope you would also agree and trust me when I say, a few minutes of your time today will save you an enormous amount of time and money tomorrow. In the last few years I have seen the number of

mold practitioners exponentially grow. Many of whom have very little or limited industrial hygiene and IAQ related experience. They just want to take your money! Work with a professional who is properly qualified (ACAC certified) and not just understands how to turn on a moisture meter or an air sampling pump, but honestly understand the microbial and moisture intrusion universe and can prove it! An easy to use, reasonable, achievable and clear to understand Environmental Mold Risk Management program prepared by a professional and complied with your contractor or facility staff will be one of the best investments and returns you can ever imagine. As we know and many will learn over the next few years, not having a mold program in place will become a very expensive experience. Begin protecting yourself, your occupants, your residents and the general public today. Call your environmental professional and find out what an Environmental Mold Risk Management plan includes and how to use it before it is too late. Call today!

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