

CASE STUDY



Moisture, Mold and Asbestos Containment Efforts Put a Renovation Project Back on Track

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Moisture Management Assessment Finds Cascading Series of Troubles

THE PROBLEM: Renovations were underway at the facility in Canoga Park, California when seasonably heavy rains left the region drenched. The water pounded the 50,000 square foot area of the facility undergoing renovation causing roof leaks that left offices, hallways and carpeting soaked on the first and second floors.

Responding to perform an emergency moisture assessment, the Omega team, including a senior industrial hygienist, carefully surveyed the damage and conducted air sampling for the presence of mold.

Positive results led the team to suspect that mold had formed beneath the building's 50-year-old carpet.

Additional assessments included visual assessment, Infrared Thermography (IT) and moisture meter measurements. The results showed water staining and damage as well as moisture retained in walls, suspended ceiling tiles, ceiling drywall and carpets. Shampooing to rid the carpet of mold led to the discovery of fibers in the wastewater. Testing of the wastewater revealed the fibers to be asbestos.

The discovery introduced hazardous waste considerations to the project and a careful remediation process was begun to get the renovations back on track safely, cost-effectively and in compliance with local, state and federal environmental regulations.

Mold, Moisture Remediation and Hazardous Waste Disposal

THE SOLUTION: Water impacted building materials were removed, including 2,400 square feet of the carpet flooring and 4,000 square feet of drywall. Targeted dry down efforts made use of dehumidifiers and other mechanical equipment.

Because the asbestos fibers that had originated in the mastic adhesive used to secure the carpet tiles had found their way into the steam cleaning water, the wastewater was carefully collected and filtered in accordance with federal, state and local criteria prior to being released. Filtered asbestos fibers and some lead-containing materials were also disposed of under hazardous waste requirements.

A final post-remediation visual assessment confirmed that the affected areas were sufficiently dry and showed no staining or mold growth. A recommendation was made to replace the removed drywall and the project moved forward without further delay.

A thorough and quickly initiated moisture assessment and careful moisture mitigation protocols can prevent significant damage to a project.

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MOISTURE MANAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS:

4,000
square feet of
drywall removed

1%
Amount of
asbestos material
present to qualify
as an Asbestos-
Containing
Material (ACM)
under EPA
definition

2,400
square feet of
carpet flooring
removed

50,000
square feet of
renovation area

24-48 hours
between
moisture intrusion
and beginning of
mold growth

Quick Response Minimizes Damage

When it comes to water and moisture intrusion, a quick response is critical to minimize damage to building materials. Once damp or wet, surfaces can begin growing mold within 24 to 48 hours, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

A moisture intrusion assessment includes visual inspection for signs of water staining and mold growth and the use of infrared technology to look for temperature differentials that are a sign of elevated moisture within walls. A moisture meter is used for confirmation. Dry-down techniques using dehumidifiers and air movers are used to eliminate the moisture. In cases like the one above, moisture impacted building materials may also need to be removed.

A thorough and quickly initiated moisture assessment and careful moisture mitigation protocols can prevent significant damage to a project, whether it is renovation or new construction.

ABOUT OMEGA ENVIRONMENTAL

Omega Environmental is a full-service company providing 24/7 support for such emergencies. With decades of experience in the assessment and remediation of environmental hazards including **asbestos, lead, PCBs, mold and moisture**, and a wide array of other environmental hazards, our team has deep expertise in the rapid assessment and mitigation of environmental problems, so our clients can get back to work.

Our team includes Ph.D. level experts in the assessment and removal of hazardous materials in full compliance with all environmental regulations.

Contact Omega Environmental today to learn how we can help keep your project on track with timely and cost-effective environmental assessment.