

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

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Settlement Reached Over Lead Paint Violations in California Rental Homes

Federal environmental regulators have reached a \$75,000 settlement with a California rental company that failed to tell tenants that their children may be exposed to a risk of lead paint poisoning.

The settlement was announced on October 4, following a complaint brought by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) against J.D. Home Rentals for violating the federal Toxic Substances Control Act.

According to the EPA, J.D. Homes manages 12 rental properties in the Fresno and Clovis areas where lead paint was present on windows. However, families that moved into the properties were not properly informed of the potential hazard, as required by law.

[Lead Paint Settlement Reached Over EPA Violations in Rental Homes](#)

Family Abandons Home Over Mold Fears

Misti Pepple has a house. Her bills are paid, and her mortgage payments are current. She's also homeless.

Pepple and her two teenage boys on Friday abandoned their home in St. Thomas Township. Mold has taken up residence in the kitchen floor.

She and her boyfriend, Richie Treadway, spent most of Friday calling agencies, churches and the insurance company for help.

The typical answer: "That's not something we help with."

Pepple is staying in a girlfriend's parents' recreational vehicle. The boys moved in with their father.

They started getting sick more than a month ago, around the same time that a small black spot appeared on the kitchen floor. It grew steadily, but they noticed no other change inside the house.

Since being exposed to the mold, Pepple has vomited blood, probably drainage from her raw throat and sinuses, Treadway said.

The boys have missed a lot of school, Pepple said. Her younger son gets bad headaches and acid reflux. Her older son, who has asthma, coughs and keeps getting sick for no apparent reason.

A contractor inspected the house. They went into the crawl space and peeled back a chunk of insulation.

"The mold was so thick under the insulation it was like mud," she said. "After you realize how much mold is down there, it's not safe."

"The doctor said (on Friday) you need to get out of the house," Pepple said.

[Family Abandons Home Over Mold Fears](#)

See *Moving Forward, After the Mold* on page 2

Moving Forward, After the Mold

By Andrea Fabry

It's been three years since we walked away from our home and life as we knew it. We left twenty-six years of baby boxes, heirlooms, treasured books, and precious memories behind and walked into an unknown future.

As with any catastrophe it's hard to grasp the magnitude of such a loss until it's broken into heart-sized pieces. We grasp the magnitude of an earthquake by looking into the eyes of an orphan aching for his mother. I feel the loss most keenly when I picture Ryan's beloved Barney lunchbox or our firstborn's baby book complete with locks of hair. Why is it that losing "everything" is easier to bear than the thought of Shannon's indelible etching of "Merry Christmas" in the wood mounting of our bathroom door?

We've been in crisis for three years so I've had little time to dwell on specifics, but the gaping heartache rarely leaves. I would give anything to know what I know now and go back to the comfort of friends and "normalcy."

I wonder how we would survive a different tragedy. There's something unique about losing a home to toxic mold because of the loneliness that stems from the lack of understanding. If your house burns in a fire, you lose everything but insurance generally covers the cost of rebuilding. With most companies, mold is written out of the policy. The financial repercussions pale in comparison to the life-long health implications. Would a tsunami be easier?

I've found comfort in the biblical account of Job who lost everything, including his children. My children survived...but my dreams for them died. There have been no boils covering my body—I've just had debilitating memory loss. We didn't lose fields and livestock; we lost 3/4 of an acre. Still, I relate to Job. His friends, after all, blamed him for his disaster. They accused and questioned, just like mine.



Andrea Fabry



Frodo and Gandalf

Moving Forward, After the Mold (continued)

Perhaps my greatest comfort has been the epoch character of Frodo in Lord of the Rings. Frodo is given a task. Little does he know the magnitude of what has been asked of him. His first step is to leave the comfort of the Shire. The further he gets, the more difficult life becomes:

"In that lonely place Frodo for the first time fully realized his homelessness and danger. He wished bitterly that his fortune had left him in the quiet and beloved Shire."

Many days I wish I were back in my Shire. Perhaps one day I'll stop looking back. For now I echo these thoughts of Frodo:

"How do you pick up the threads of an old life? How do you go on, when in your heart you begin to understand...there is no going back? There are some things that time cannot mend. Some hurts that go too deep, that have taken hold."

Despite his misgivings, Frodo moves forward. He has no choice. And neither do I. This is what it means to cope: to take the next step, however small or unknown.

"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

You can read Andrea's profile in the September 27, 2010 GIHN Newsletter. To read more of Andrea's informative and inspirational writings, check out [Andrea's blog](#).

See *Gyms close due to elevated mercury levels* on page 3

Two Columbus Gyms Close for Elevated Mercury Vapor Readings

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department says it is closing two of its recreation center gymnasiums effective Tuesday due to elevated mercury vapor readings.

Recreation and Parks became suspicious and contracted with Resource International Inc. after reading about several area school systems that had high mercury-vapor readings from the underlying synthetic floor coverings in their gymnasiums.

"In the stories that we read, we knew that we had built some of our facilities around the same time the schools put in or replaced their gymnasium floors, and so we thought it would be useful to have tests run to see if any of our facilities had similar issues," said Alan D. McKnight, director, Columbus Recreation and Parks.

After several air quality checks were done, the department found six facilities did show some mercury vapor readings that were higher than normal.

The CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry recommends that an indoor air mercury vapor level should be less than 1,000 ng/m³ for residential and school/day care settings and 3,000 ng/m³ for occupational and commercial settings.

"We are taking precautions in closing the two gymnasiums not because we believe anyone has been harmed but because we want to be proactive in doing the right thing to lessen any possible risk," said McKnight. "The department has begun the process of having those floors replaced over the next four to six months, and it is our intent to also replace the floors at the four athletic complexes just as soon as we can."

"Mercury is a hazardous element that can be absorbed through the skin, inhaled or ingested," said Dr. LeMaile-Williams. "Symptoms of acute mercury poisoning are headache, nausea and vomiting and difficulty breathing, including coughing up blood."

[Two Columbus Gyms Close for Elevated Mercury Vapor Readings](#)



*Far East Recreation Center
Columbus, Ohio*

Free Asbestos Training Offered in Britain

Thousands of tradesmen are to get free asbestos awareness training in a bid to tackle ignorance about Britain's biggest industrial killer. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), in partnership with industry, set a poignant target of 4000 hours of face-to-face training to be donated during September - one hour for each life lost to asbestos related illnesses in an average year. A target for a further 4000 hours of online training was also set.

The free training is available throughout October and November and is aimed at those most likely to disturb the asbestos fibres as they go about their work - tradesmen such as joiners, electricians and plumbers, around 20 of whom lose their lives to asbestos-related diseases every week.

"Each day we visit newly diagnosed mesothelioma sufferers who were never warned of the dangers of asbestos at work and who never knew how essential it was to avoid exposure to asbestos. The importance of asbestos awareness and training today cannot be exaggerated: it's absolutely vital."

Across Britain, more than 40,000 people have died from the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma since the late 1960-- and the numbers dying are increasing. Latest annual figures show that 2,249 people died from the disease in 2008 alone, up over three per cent on the previous year.

[4,000 Tradesmen to Confront a Hidden Killer](#)

See *New Research Papers* on page 4

New Research Papers

The following papers were provided by Dr. Jack Thrasher and Dr. Laura Mark.

Features of Microglia and Neuroinflammation Relevant to Environmental Exposure and Neurotoxicity

by Andrew D. Kraft and G. Jean Harry

Microglia are resident cells of the brain involved in regulatory processes critical for development, maintenance of the neural environment, injury and repair.

For any evaluation of neuroinflammation and microglial responses, within the framework of neurotoxicity or degeneration, one key question in determining the consequence of neuroinflammation is whether the response is an initiating event or the consequence of tissue damage.

Systems Responses of Rats to Aflatoxin B1 Exposure Revealed with Metabonomic Changes in Multiple Biological Matrices

by Limin Zhang, et al

Exposure to aflatoxins causes liver fibrosis and hepatocellular carcinoma posing a significant health risk for human populations and livestock. To understand the mammalian systems responses to aflatoxin-B1 (AFB1) exposure, we analyzed the AFB1-induced metabonomic changes in multiple biological matrices (plasma, urine, and liver) of rats using 1H NMR spectroscopy together with clinical biochemistry and histopathologic assessments.

These findings provide an overview of biochemical consequences of AFB1 exposure and comprehensive insights into the metabolic aspects of AFB1-induced hepatotoxicity in rats.

Inflammatory Cause of Bipolar Disorder Suggests New Treatments

by Mitchell L. Zoler

Recently reported evidence implicating inflammatory mediators in the pathophysiology of bipolar disorder and major depression have opened the door to testing new agents for treating these psychiatric disorders or slowing their progression.

In another study, Dr. Berk and his associates found a link between elevated serum levels of high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP) and the incidence of major depressive disorder.

Dr. Berk also reported as yet unpublished results from his group that further supported a possible causal role for inflammation or autoimmunity in major depression.



Bronx New School contaminated with trichloroethylene



Toxic Chemical in New York School

Ginette Sosa's daughter used to get such severe headaches in the cafeteria of the Bronx New School, PS 51 that eventually she started refusing to go to lunch.

So Ms. Sosa was extremely alarmed when officials determined that PS 51's building, at 3200 Jerome Ave., contained levels of the toxic chemical trichloroethylene that exceeded state guidelines by up to 10 times the legal limit, particularly in the air of the cafeteria and basement.

Now, she wants answers. And she is not alone. Families and staffers want to know how long they, or their children, were exposed to the chemical, what the potential health effects are and what they can do to prevent possible illness.

The DOE is unsure how long students and staff were exposed because officials waited 20 years to test the site, which was used by a lighting manufacturer and was formerly listed as one of the city's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act sites, meaning it housed or produced hazardous waste.

Trichloroethylene, or TCE, is a colorless, sweet-smelling liquid that is primarily used to remove grease from metal parts. Exposure can result in dizziness, headaches, confusion, euphoria, facial numbness, weakness, developmental issues, cancer (particularly in the liver) and death.

The school has now been closed.

[DOE Delays Leave Parents in Dark About School Toxins](#)

See [Another Maine Town Goes Pesticide Free](#) on page 5

Another Maine Town Goes Pesticide Free

The town of Scarborough, Maine joins the ever-growing list of communities in Maine and around the country that have decided to ditch conventional, chemical-intensive landscape management practices on public properties in favor of a more sustainable approach. The town Council Members passed a Pest Management Policy last week which prohibits the use of synthetic or chemical pesticides on town-owned property, including schools, sidewalks, athletic fields, parks, and rights of ways. In addition to banning synthetic pesticides, the policy also creates a Pest Management Advisory Committee to help implement and oversee the program and the use of web and signs to notify residents when any products are used.

Some opponents of the policy, including some landscapers and a city councilor, expressed concern that the new policy will be more costly than chemical lawn care. However, there are plenty of successful and cost-effective programs across the country that prove that you can maintain turf without the use toxic chemicals. Some examples include: New York State Parks; Chicago City Parks; 29 communities and townships in New Jersey; at least 17 cities in the Northwest, covering more than 50 parks; and, numerous communities throughout Massachusetts, Maine and Connecticut.

Eliminating toxic pesticides is important in lawn and landscape management, considering that of the 30 most commonly used lawn pesticides: 14 are probable or possible carcinogens, 13 are linked with birth defects, 21 with reproductive effects, 15 with neurotoxicity, 26 with liver or kidney damage, and 27 are sensitizers and/or irritants. The most popular and widely used lawn chemical 2,4-D, which kills broad leaf weeds like dandelions, is an endocrine disruptor with predicted human health risks ranging from changes in estrogen and testosterone levels, thyroid problems, prostate cancer and reproductive abnormalities. 2,4-D has also been linked to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Other lawn chemicals like glyphosate (RoundUp) have also been linked to serious adverse chronic effects in humans. Imidacloprid, another pesticide growing in popularity, has been implicated in bee toxicity and the recent Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) phenomena.

[Another Maine Town Goes Pesticide Free](#)



Another Maine town goes pesticide free

Homecoming Nightmare

Chrysantha Hollemans has been paying premiums to her home insurance company for 33 years, almost half her life. So when a Personal Insurance adviser told her she would not be covered for \$16,000 in mould damage to her Kanata home, caused by an undetected water leak, the dismayed 68-year-old asked herself: Does being a loyal customer not count for anything anymore?

Personal did cover \$4,500 for damage to her basement after a frozen water pipe burst in January. Her furnace conked out and it took three days for a repairman to arrive at her home. Says Hollemans: "I'm so afraid of water right now."

Hollemans spent more than three weeks in hospital from June to July. Two weeks of that time was in an induced coma. Infection shut down her kidneys and other organs. She says her daughter, Sharon, was told by doctors that her mother only had a 25-percent chance of surviving.

Hollemans says she began feeling lousy as she was washing curtains in her basement last June. The next day, she felt awful again. Her vision started going weird; it was as if she was looking into tin foil, she says. "I knew something was wrong," so she called 911 for an ambulance.

With the help of this news coverage, Personal Insurance has now decided to pay the claim "because Hollemans was not there, and there's no reasonable expectation that someone else would cover for her...(the mould) is a result of that pipe bursting, so it's not a maintenance issue."

[Homecoming Nightmare](#)

See *Students Displaced by Mould* on page 6

Students Displaced as Mould Closes Burin's Pearce Junior High

Students and teachers of Pearce Junior High School in Burin began familiarizing themselves with their new surroundings Friday morning. For the second time in recent years, a mould problem was found in the building two weeks ago.

As a result, the 264 students and 19 staff members in grades 8 and 9 will take up residence in two other area schools for the next six to eight weeks as clean up and major repairs are undertaken.

Eastern School District CEO Ford Rice told The Southern Gazette last week the school was closed for a professional development day when the mould was found Sept. 22. He said a small amount was initially found on the front wall of the building.

"Upon further inspection, we also found that it seemed to be associated with a water infiltration problem through the roof."

Mr. Rice explained water was apparently leaking into the interior cavity of the wall.

"We've done test holes in all other areas of the building and have found no other problems."

He indicated a project to replace the school roof has already been approved through the Department of Education and will now be fast tracked. The total cost of the work is expected to be around \$500,000.

Wednesday evening, a meeting was held to bring parents up to speed on the relocation process. Some were okay with it. Some weren't. Many would like to see Pearce replaced with a new school instead of throwing \$500,000 into a 45-year-old building.

[Students Displaced as Mould Closes Burin's Pearce Junior High](#)

[Next Newsletter: Friday, October 21, 2011](#)



*Burin's Pearce Junior High closed due to mold
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada*

Military Families Moved Because of Mold Issues

Two military families say they've been compensated for damaged furniture and moved to new housing because of mold problems in their military homes in Aliamanu, Hawaii.

Raquel Garcia, whose husband is a staff sergeant in the Army, said that Island Palm Communities, the partnership between Lend Lease and the Army managing the Aliamanu homes, paid her \$18,500 for damage to furniture caused by the mold in a duplex she lived in.

Nicole Aguilar, who lived in the other half of the duplex, said her home also had extensive mold problems. Aguilar received \$13,000 for damage to her furniture, she said.

More than 100 other families in homes built by the same developer have reported mold problems, the newspaper reports.

[Military Families Moved Because of Mold Issues](#)

Quick Links

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Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments