



Before you move

Steps to reduce the risk of mold and mildew growth on household goods during transit

Household goods and personal belongings shipped around the world are often transported inside metal containers. While these containers are built to resist water intrusion, condensation or high humidity conditions can occur inside. Temperature fluctuations inside the shipping container which are often significantly warmer than outside, create environmental conditions favorable for the growth of mold spores.

Mold and mildew spores are present in our everyday environment and can exist on a variety of surfaces. They can grow on wood products, ceiling tiles, wallpaper, carpets, drywall, plastic, plants, food and insulation. While pervasive, the spores are generally not dangerous, however, under the right atmospheric conditions they can grow rapidly, damaging goods and producing a variety of unpleasant odors.

Properly preparing a shipment of household goods (“HHG”) before packing and loading will eliminate a number of the “triggers” that can contribute to the growth of mold and mildew during the shipment’s transit or storage process. The procedures listed below are highly recommended.

1 month to 2 weeks before packing:



Move furniture away from the walls, because moisture can be trapped between the wall and upholstery, creating conditions that can contribute to the growth of mold. *(Keep the furniture away from the walls until the furniture is packed and loaded. Be especially vigilant about furniture located near air conditioning/central air vents or window units. A great deal of moisture can accumulate near air conditioners, which creates ideal conditions for mold growth)*



Do **NOT** steam clean area rugs less than 4 weeks prior to packing. Even though the rug may feel dry to the touch, residual moisture in the fibers could contribute to the growth of mold once the rug is rolled up for packing.



Do **NOT** steam clean or use other water-based cleaning methods on upholstered items **at least 1 month** before packing *(this includes car upholstery)*. Residual moisture can remain in the fabrics and cushions for weeks, contributing to the growth of mold once your shipment is loaded.



Wash and thoroughly **dry** all clothing **NO LESS** than 3 days before packing.



Ensure refrigerators, freezers, washing machines and similar appliances are completely clean, dry and at room temperature before packing. Refrigerators should be unplugged 24 hours before transit.



“Air out” and dry items kept in damp or moist areas, like basements/bathrooms. This includes outdoor furniture, especially if those furnishings include fabric, cushions and/or pillows. This can be accomplished through the utilization of air conditioners, exhaust fans and/or dehumidifiers in the weeks leading up to your move.



Conduct a comprehensive assessment of your belongings, particularly mattresses, boxsprings and other items unused for an extended period of time. Conduct a thorough cleaning of any items showing any possibility of mold growth, real or expected. Carriers will not pack items with mold growth.



DON'T include any damp goods in your shipment or goods that exhibit outward signs of mold and/or mildew.



Avoid packing liquids in your shipment whenever possible. NEVER pack previously opened containers holding liquids. Any spillage of liquids during the transit process can contribute to the growth of mold and mildew



Consider turning off your air conditioning on pack day to avoid last minute build-up of condensation.



Add desiccant packs to washers, refrigerators and cartons with shoes or leather goods.



To the extent possible, leather goods such as coats and skirts as well as furnishings should be cleaned or wiped down before transit. Assure that the items are completely dry before packing.

In addition to the listed precautionary steps, it is also highly recommended you purchase mold and mildew protection as part of your overall insurance protection for your household goods shipment. Even though every effort is made to reduce the risk of mold and mildew impacting your shipment, not every risk can be eliminated. Reduce the humidity in your home before you pack, and the likelihood that your goods arrive mold-free is greatly improved.



Boris Populoh
National Practice Leader - SVP Relocation -
UNIRISC, Inc. - Risk Strategies Company
Part of the Brown & Brown Team
Ph: 703.797.3252
bpopuloh@unirisc.com

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