



## DR05: Green Cheese: Mold is a 4-letter Word

Mold (“mould” in Australia and the UK) is everywhere, besides being in your cheese. However, many molds common to construction are harmful to people. In the last decade, many US architects have had claims and lawsuits for failing to prevent mold in buildings.

Mold is not yet a significant cause of risk in Australian design practice, perhaps because the climate generally is less conducive to mold growth than in the US; however it should be considered as a potential risk in tropical and sub-tropical areas, especially where moisture may be trapped in building elements.

Mold requires moisture to grow, and growth is aided by warmth. The energy conservation movement has increased mold problems because “tight” buildings, that keep cold air out also keep materials from drying out, and mold growth is the usual consequence.

Accordingly, the incidence of mold as a risk has risen sharply. However, an awareness of the problem, and knowledge of techniques for avoiding it, mean that designers can reduce their risk significantly. There are many useful guides available on the internet; a few are listed below.

[http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/ek\\_members/documents/pdf/aia016653.pdf](http://www.aia.org/aiaucmp/groups/ek_members/documents/pdf/aia016653.pdf)

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/>

<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/7287/>

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/mold/moldhomes.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>

<http://www.aiadc.org/AIAdotNET/IndustryIssues/Index.aspx?I=Issue-Mold>

William B. Rose: *Water in Buildings: An Architect's Guide to Moisture and Mold* - available from amazon.com.

To see other **DesignRisk** “more info” docs, go to

[http://iprojects.net.au/index.php/user\\_guides](http://iprojects.net.au/index.php/user_guides) and scroll down to the bottom: 8.0 DESIGN RISK, and click on the document you'd like to review.