THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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125 Cedar Street

Introduction

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) conducted a walkthrough inspection for the presence of mold at 125 Cedar Street (120 Liberty Street) on July 19, 2002. 125 Cedar Street is located adjacent to the southern boarder of the World Trade Center site. It is a twelve-story building. Each floor is split into a north and south apartment. A penthouse is located on top of the building. The building was reported to have mold growth resulting from water damage from several sources that primarily impacted the apartments on the north side. Most of the water damage reportedly occurred as a result of internal plumbing problems (i.e. broken pipes and a broken toilet tank). Some water infiltration was reported through windows broken as a result of the collapse of the Twin Towers. Five water-damaged apartments were inspected. Tenants from two of the inspected apartments, the building superintendent, Bob Bacar, and EPA Representative, Bob Fitzpatrick, accompanied DOHMH.

Discussion and Findings

The ceilings in all of the apartments consisted of painted plaster. Dividing walls in each apartment were composed of ¾ inch sheetrock. The following is a discussion of each of the five inspected apartments:

Apartment 3N –

Peeling paint was observed on much of the ceiling throughout the apartment. Extensive visible mold (greater than 100 square feet) was observed in the bedroom adjoining the entrance hallway. Visible mold was noted on several walls and the ceiling in this room. Small areas (less than 10 square feet) of mold growth were also noted on the entrance hallway ceiling and the ceiling in the workroom that is adjacent to the aforementioned bedroom.

Apartment 4N –

Peeling paint was observed on much of the ceiling throughout the apartment. Some of the wood flooring was buckled. Moderate areas (10-30 square feet) of visible mold were observed in the hallway closet and children's bedroom. A small area of mold was also noted on the hallway wall. Additionally, a cutout of the wallboard in the hallway revealed the presence of mold on the backside of wallboard in the children's bedroom. The extent of this growth could not be determined.

Apartment 5N –

Water damage was less extensive in this apartment. Some peeling paint was observed on the ceiling in a workroom and above a drop ceiling over the bathroom by the workroom. No visible mold was observed in these areas. A small area of water damage was also noted in the kitchen above the shelving on the wall. It was unclear if the discoloration in this location was mold growth.

Apartment 6N –

Ceiling water damage was noted and some chipping paint was observed on the ceiling in several areas. Some of wood flooring was buckled. It was unclear whether a small area of discoloration in one location (in the corner of the ceiling, above the radiator, in the room with the desk) was mold growth.

Apartment 5S –

Small areas of chipping paint were observed in three rooms of this apartment. No visible mold growth was noted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is recommended that any visible mold be removed in accordance with the enclosed DOHMH Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments. It is also recommended that the small areas of discoloration that could not be identified as mold growth be remediated in accordance with these guidelines. Buckled flooring should be removed and inspected for mold growth. The full extent of the mold growth in the area revealed by the cutout in apartment 4N should be determined.

Where wallboard or flooring is removed, exposed areas should be inspected for mold growth. If mold growth is discovered, the extent of the growth should be determined and remediation practices should be adjusted accordingly. It is possible that mold growth is occurring behind other sheetrocked walls. Perimeter plaster walls are not likely to promote significant mold growth on the unpainted interstitial space. Exploratory cutouts of the sheetrock (preferably at the base of the wall) should be performed in areas where water damage is observed but no visible mold growth is seen to identify possible hidden sources of mold.