



1). How do I read my Tape Lift report?

The top portion of the report is all the information you provided on the paperwork or test kit or samples you sent in to the lab.

The second or middle section of the report is a list of the sample location (if you provided them) on the left side of the page and the types of mold that were found (if any) are listed on the right side of the page along with a rating system of 1X-4X(see #2 for more on this subject).

The bottom portion of the report shows the laboratory licenses and certifications as well as the technician who analyzed your sample(s).

2). What does the rating system 1X-4X mean?

Although the tape / direct type testing is generally not used for quantitative testing, we soon came to realize that that is one of the first questions customers would ask when they received their test results back. In response we created the rating system of 1X-4X so you would have a relative idea of how much mold there is in your sample.

Typically we look about the size of a dime under the microscope and give it a visual estimate rating of 1-4X. 1X equals a trace amount and can be found in typical dust samples and a 4X rating of abundant tends to come directly from a source of the mold. For example, you saw mold growing on a piece of wood, you sent in a tape lift sample of it, the lab would probably send you back a report with a 4X rating of what ever type of mold was there.

Now if you had taken a sample of dust that had settled on a table top, you may get a report back with a 1X of several types of mold listed. It is normal for many types of mold to be airborne every day so it is not uncommon to find trace amounts in a typical dust sample.

3). What does the "other" on my report mean?

Occasionally we find a type of mold spore on a sample that we are unable to identify by direct examination under the microscope. One method used to try to identify unknown mold spores is to do what is called a culture of the mold spore. The lab will try to get the mold to grow on a Petri dish and monitor its size, shape, color etc., because these characteristics can aid in identification. However, there are many types of mold that do not grow well in the laboratory setting, and are difficult to identify. In those cases we will list the spore as "other" letting the customer know that "yes" we did find mold on your sample however it is **not** a type of mold that we routinely identify such as Stachybotrys.

4). What do I do now?

If you received a lab report back that had high or abundant levels of types of mold that have health affects associated with it, we usually recommend that you hire a professional to come out to your home or business to perform a more detailed assessment which often includes taking air samples. Air sampling will tell you if that same mold the lab detected on your tape lift sample is airborne.

If you need help finding a professional in your area to take air samples we may have a referral for you. Also, you can find professionals on the Internet or look in your local phone book under labels/search criteria such as: Indoor Air Quality testing, Industrial Hygienist, Environmental Consultant, Mold Remediation, or check with your local health department for a list like the Texas link below.

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mold/profession.shtm>

5). How do I get rid of it?

Consider that most all mold is considered allergens and some may be toxigenic so if you are going to disturb the mold with cleaning methods, you increase your chances of exposure to the particulate. That being said, mold clean up and disposal methods vary greatly from source to source and company to company. A good rule of thumb is that if the contaminated area is small and the material is non porous such as metal, it can be cleaned by traditional methods, taking care to use personal protective equipment.

Porous materials on the other hand, such as wood, textiles, sheetrock etc. are difficult to clean because of the tiny microscopic holes in the material. The root type structures of the mold called hyphae/mycelia, can grow down into the holes and make it hard to clean effectively. The surface can appear to be wiped clean but as soon as the conditions are favorable the mold can start to grow again from the hyphae down inside the material.

You may find these sources helpful.

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

<http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib101003.html>

6). Are these levels high?

For explanation of tape lift results please see answer [#2](#) above. For air samples, the generally accepted industry guideline is that you want your inside air sample types and concentrations of mold to be similar to and or less than the outside types and concentrations of mold detected.

For this reason, it is important that your consultant take an Outside/Baseline/Control sample from a non complaint or contaminated area, preferably outdoors so that you can establish what is considered "normal" in your specific area at that time of year.

Keep in mind that there are numerous variables involved in interpreting lab results and attempting to make conclusions based solely on preliminary testing such as tape lifts is generally considered unreliable.

EPA, OSHA, NIOSH and other occupational health related associations in the U.S. have not yet to this date established permissible exposure levels (PEL), recommended exposure limits (REL), or other limit values for aeroallergens. The general guidelines listed here represent commonly accepted interpretations and practices derived from various sources, including the American Industrial Hygiene Association and Health Canada. Please realize that the evaluation of one's specific results in terms of potential health hazards and subsequent courses of action are beyond the scope of the laboratory analysis. Contact your physician to discuss possible health effects and medical advice. Those requiring expert advisement on a particular indoor air quality issue should retain the services of a professional IAQ consultant.

7). Is this the Black Mold?

Usually when a customer asks this question he/she is referring to *Stachybotrys*, because that is the particular type of mold that received so much media coverage in the late 90's and early 2000's. Although *Stachybotrys* is

black in color, so are many other types of mold. Do not assume you have *Stachybotrys* just because the mold is black.

Also, you do not want to make the mistake and discount the importance of other types of mold that may be listed on your report. Just because you do not see the word or words *Stachybotrys* or Black mold on your report does not mean that there may not be a potentially harmful mold present. Please look up the type of mold detected on your report on our [glossary of terms](#) for a better understanding of the type of mold you are dealing with.

There are many excellent resources for mold information on the Internet and we encourage you to educate yourself with information from as many different sources as deemed reasonable.

8). Can we still live here?

That is a difficult question to answer since there are no established 'safe' levels of mold and more importantly individuals have dramatically different resistances to mold. If you received test results back and after looking up those types of mold on our [glossary of terms](#) or used another resource and determined that there are some potentially harmful health affects associated with the mold, you should consult with your healthcare provider regarding further exposure. The following questions may help you answer that question.

a) How wide spread is the contamination? Is it inside a cabinet? Or is it inside a wall cavity, or under the entire carpet pad? If it is a small area you can close/seal it off until it can be cleaned properly by a professional. If the contamination is wide spread or you do not know the extent of the contamination you should probably contact a professional in your area for advice.

b) Do any of the occupant's fall into the particularly susceptible group, like persons with existing respiratory disorders, the young, the elderly or the immune suppressed? If so, it is recommended to err on the side of caution and discontinue any possible exposure of these individuals.

c) Is the mold airborne? Is the mold in an occupied area? If you received a lab report back from tape lifts and the types of mold listed have potential health affects associated with it, we recommend contacting a professional in your local area to take air samples for you. A professional must take air samples because specialized equipment is used. Having air samples taken will let you know if the mold you sent in on the tape lifts has contaminated the air. We highly recommend having an Exterior / outdoor sample taken at approximately the same time the interior samples are taken so you will know what is considered normal for your area this time of year.

d) Have you been experiencing any health problems that you think may be due to mold exposure?

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

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mold/>

9). Will it come back?

It certainly can if the conditions are conducive to its growth. Different types of mold thrive in various conditions. Some types of mold grow in high moisture, some low, some like cellulose, some prefer decaying material, etc.

For this reason it is easy to see how you can have one type of mold growing in the bathroom and yet another type growing in the kitchen or on a tree stump in the yard. As far as in your home, control of mold growth involves keeping the organic materials dry and keeping wet areas clean of organic dust/dirt/debris.

10). What about my clothing, furniture etc.?

Can these items be cleaned or do I need to throw everything out? If the item is a non-porous hard surface such as metal or plastic they typically can be cleaned. The tricky items are the porous materials like clothing and furniture and whether the mold was growing on it or the contamination was from settled spores. [See question #5](#) for more on this topic.

Was the item the source from which you lifted the tape sample? Or is the item simply in the same area or room of the contamination?

11). I can't find the attachment in my email or the attachment will not open.

Please call (972) 247-9373 or Toll free 1-866-416-MOLD. Or email info@moldlab.com the lab so we can send the report to you in a different format or an alternate way i.e. fax or U.S. Mail.

To open an email attachment, first open your email program. Then open the email from Moldlab, then look for the word "attachment" typed below the subject line of the email. Also you can look for a big paperclip symbol. Click on the paperclip and the file should open.

12). How do I read my Airborne Mold Spore summary report?

The top portion of report: is the information you provided on the pamphlet returned to lab with test kit. The second or middle section of the report: is a list of the sample locations (if you provided them) on the left side of page and the types of mold that were found (if any) and their corresponding raw counts and calculated concentrations on the right of page. The bottom portion of the report: Are the laboratory licenses and certifications as well as the technician who analyzed your sample(s).

13). Can you explain what the Airborne Mold Spore test kit charts and graphs mean?

Sometimes data is easier to understand if presented graphically. Therefore we have included color illustrations for each air sample submitted. The illustrations are generated from data on the first page of your report, called the Summary Report. The illustration page is divided into two portions, a top and a bottom. The top portion is a pie chart and the bottom portion is a Bar table.

The pie chart shows the relative percentages of each type of mold detected in that sample, given each sample is a whole.

The Bar table shows the sample indicated, and the Outside reference sample side by side for ease of comparison. If you see red columns on your table that means that the mold concentrations detected in your sample are greater than the mold concentration detected in your outside sample. The number printed beside the red column is how much greater the concentration for that type of mold is than the concentration for that type of mold in the Outside sample. The number was derived by subtracting the calculated concentration of the inside sample (on the summary page) from the calculated concentration of the outside sample. If you see a '0' beside the column then that means that mold concentration was lower than the outside concentration for that particular type of mold.

14). How do I know if my Airborne Mold Spore kit results are normal?

The general guideline to follow is that the concentration and types of spores in the inside sample should be similar to or lower than the concentration and types of spores found in the out of doors sample. Due to the high variability in results; this test is mainly useful as a "check" to alert one to potential problems that might have been missed by visual inspection. Accurate measurements of true airborne concentrations require multiple

samples taken during different times, and it can involve complex statistical analysis. The category Aspergillus / Penicillium are small (1-3 microns), round, colorless spores that may include: Gliocladium, Trichoderma, other morphologically consistent with Aspergillus / Penicillium types. A culture sample would be necessary to differentiate between them. Currently there are no dose response relationship statistics for allowable or safe levels of aeroallergens. However if spores of Aspergillus / Penicillium are found at higher levels than outside, or Stachybotrys are found inside at even low concentrations, further investigation of the source should be conducted and evaluated by a professional. For information about types of molds found on the lab report, please see our mold dictionary page.

15). What is the Calculated Concentration on my Airborne Mold Spore test summary report?

The calculated concentration can be found on the far right side of the Summary Report for the non cultured airborne spore report. The number is listed as spores per cubic meter of air. The number is derived using several pieces of data: the number of minutes the pump ran, the pump settings, the raw count (see raw count # x), cassette dimensions and microscope info. All data goes into an equation to generate the 'calculated concentration'. We think this explanation works well: Imagine taking a 1 liter pitcher from the kitchen and scooping up one pitcher full of air, (of course you can't really do this, but imagine if you could) the calculated concentration is a representation of how many mold spores would theoretically be in that pitcher of air.

16). What is the Raw count on my Airborne Mold Spore test summary report?

The 'raw' count found on the right side of the summary report can be thought of as an actual count. The number is how many spores we actually viewed on your sample while looking through the microscope. We use this number to generate the calculated concentration (see question [#15](#))

17). Can you tell me a little more about Airborne Mold Spore samples?

Air-o-cell®, Allergenco, and Allergenco-D® samples require specialized equipment. This type of sample is a non-cultured air sample. Results are reported in concentrations of spores per cubic meter (spores/m³). This test is referred to as a "snapshot" of the air at the exact time of sampling. Results account for both alive and dead spores as well as pollen, skin, insect parts etc. (if a full profile analysis is requested). Air-o-cells® can also be used to test inside a wall cavity (by removing a light switch panel or other opening). Usually only 15 to 30 liters is the most one can sample before completely overloading the sample with drywall dust.