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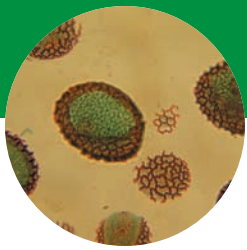
RIA Convention Highlights



Inside:

**Health Issues in the Industry
Critical Leadership Questions**

**Gypsum Board &
Moisture Absorption**



By Michael A. Pinto, CSP, CMP

The Internet and the Environmental Information Age – Part 1

Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series. Part two will appear in the June 2010 issue.

Back when I was a young safety professional sorting through complicated problems as an analyst for Michigan OSHA or as a manager at the National Safety Council, the most difficult aspect of the work was generally acquiring enough good information to make and justify a decision. This usually meant multiple trips to the in-house library, tracking down books or research publications, scanning through endless rolls of microfiche documents and waiting several days for the arrival of reference materials from interagency document depositories. Many times, bad policies or decisions could be traced back to a lack of information.

Fast forward 30 years, where acquiring information is no longer the stumbling block to good decisions. Now we have a global library

of the ages available at our fingertips courtesy of the World Wide Web. In seconds we can access thousands of documents, slides, photos, videos and sound bites on every conceivable subject. But this profusion of instant data has created its own problems. While acquiring information is no longer a limiting factor in most decision making processes, organizing, managing and interpreting it are the squeeze points in turning data into useful information.

In addition, getting data from reliable sources is an emerging challenge. The dubious content of so much internet information was impacting our entire society to the point that the Snopes website (www.snopes.com) was set up to check the validity of questionable information that now travels so far so fast that an urban legend can be born in hours rather than years. For a restoration and cleaning professional, having a stable of accurate information resources is critical to

making and defending business decisions — particularly in the environmental aspects of our work where a wrong deci-

sion can damage someone's health, not just their property.

Therefore, I would like to share some of my favorite information sources with a few brief comments about what you can garner from them. They are arranged by topic in the order that has received the most attention from me lately. Happy web surfing, and do not forget to share your favorites that are not on this list with me so that I can pass them on to our fellow professionals in class or through this column.*



Lead Paint Renovation Repair and Painting (RRP) Rules

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

EPA's main pages related to lead base paint (LBP). This site provides a decent gateway to many specific programs related to controlling lead in paint including requirements regarding specific work practices, environmental concerns and specific regulatory programs including the actual EPA regulations, which are titled 40 CFR 745.80 to 745.91. It also provides links to other government programs that have rules related to lead in paint such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

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<http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm>

EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) requirements are accessed through this specific website. It includes a tremendous amount of useful information including links to needed publications such as the *Small Entity Compliance Guide*, *Renovate Right* brochure, and *Steps To Lead Safe Work Practices* brochure which is the document that is to be used as the basis for the training of all workers under this program.

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/lead/index.html>

Since the EPA's RRP rules do not do a very good job integrating their requirements with the worker protection requirements of OSHA, having access to a good database of information regarding the occupational safety approach to dealing with lead contamination is critical. This website is OSHA's main page related to lead-based paint questions.

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10641

This link takes you directly to OSHA's Lead in Construction standard (also known as 29 CFR 1926.62). These

regulations must be followed by all cleaning and restoration contractors when lead will be disturbed during construction, even if they are doing the work under the EPA's RRP rules.

<http://www.hud.gov/lead>

The main link to the Housing and Urban Development side of the equation related to lead-based paint. This one is also important for restoration contractors even if they think that they are covered completely by the EPA RRP rules as buildings that receive federal funds have additional regulatory requirements related to lead that are enforced by HUD.

Chinese Drywall

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/drywall.aspx>

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is the primary federal agency tasked with investigating and offering recommendations related to the problems associated with sulfur contaminated drywall imported from China. This website provides the latest update information and offers links to a variety of informative reports. However, be aware of your blood pressure if you dive into any of the detailed report, as it is incredibly frustrating to realize how

much they knew about this product long before they decided to take any sort of concrete action to address the problem from the homeowner's perspective.

<http://www.ChineseDrywallProtocol.org>

This website is operated by the Florida Professional Coalition For Chinese (Reactive) Drywall. It provides a great protocol for dealing with the problem materials that was out about eight months before the CPSC came forward with their official recommendations for remediation. It sure looks like the CPSC borrowed quite a bit of their information from the work done by this coalition.

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/indoor-air/inspections.html>

Pretty decent website set up to help Florida homeowners impacted by Chinese drywall. It provides a link to the Florida Department of Health's *Self-Assessment Guide* to help individuals determine whether their buildings contain this noxious product.

Mold

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

This is the EPA's main mold page and it offers a lot of information and links. It includes access to many of their reports and publications including *Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings*, a must-read document for anyone serious about addressing mold issues.

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldcourse/chapter1/home.html>

Another EPA link which includes a short program that explains the mold issue in layman's terms. It is a very informative site with an interesting mold course with nine chapters and knowledge tests.

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<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/molds/index.html>

OSHA's main mold page where you can download their booklet titled: *OSHA A Brief Guide to Mold in the Workplace*. A lot of similar information to other mold remediation documents, but focused on employers and their responsibilities for employee safety.

<http://www.iicrc.org/pdf/buydocs.pdf>

The primary order form to use when purchasing the 2008 version of the ANSI/IICRC S520 – *Standard and Reference Guide for Professional Mold Remediation*. This is a critical document used by mold renovation contractors. However, be aware; the link often brings up Microsoft warnings about viruses on the site.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/epi/moldrpt1.shtml>

Website where you can get a free download of the *New York City Guidelines*. This document is used quite frequently as a reference by agencies and organizations around the country, not just in New York City. It was developed by the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene — Bureau of Environmental & Occupational Disease Epidemiology and is officially titled the *Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments*.

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

Primary mold website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — National Center for Environmental Health. A number of good reference materials here, although they tend to be fairly technical in nature.

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/mold/index.html>

An interesting site hosted by the Minnesota Department of Health.

Check out the document *Mold in Homes*, among others.

http://www.cal-iaq.org/MIMH_2006-06.htm

This California Department of Health Services website deals with a variety of indoor air quality issues. One particularly useful information sheet is *Mold in My Home: What do I do?*

<https://webportal.aiha.org/Purchase/SearchCatalog.aspx>

This website gets you into the bookstore for the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH). Their *Bioaerosols Manual* is a classic not only for mold, but sewage, bacteria, bloodborne pathogens, legionella contamination and other biologically related contaminants.

https://webportal.aiha.org/ProductDetail.aspx?Product_code=549E0A5A-4778-DE11-96B0-0050568361FD

Another industry bookstore website; this time for the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA). They have a number of good references, particularly their *Task Force Report* on collection and interpretation of biological samples.

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/air/mould-moisissure-eng.php\(residential\)](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/air/mould-moisissure-eng.php(residential))

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/in/poll/mould-moisissure/index-eng.php\(mould-moisture\)](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/in/poll/mould-moisissure/index-eng.php(mould-moisture))

Good websites are not limited to the United States. These sites, which are hosted by the organization known as Health Canada, have an amazing number of good references related to mould. Most of them can be downloaded for free.

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

This is the official site for the *Texas Mold Regulations* through the Texas Department of State Health Services. Texas is the only state that has comprehensive regulations for mold remediation. Although the regulations do not apply to other areas of the country, they are a good reference point since they are some of the most stringent rules related to mold.

<http://www.biotoxin.info/>

An unusual website that provides information to both patients and physicians, to increase awareness regarding the causes of Biotoxin illness, and to highlight new clinical treatment discoveries. This is especially useful for individuals and physicians dealing with health effects related to mold.

I think you'll find most, if not all, of these sites very helpful. Next month I'll list websites pertaining to cleaning for a healthy environment, asbestos and some great sites for general information that you should probably consider bookmarking on your computer. ■

Michael A. Pinto, CSP, CMP, currently serves as chief executive officer of Wonder Makers Environmental, Inc. Pinto has authored three books including Fungal Contamination: A Comprehensive Guide for Remediation, over 130 technical articles, as well as 18 commercial training programs. He is the winner of the 2010 Martin L. King Award for outstanding service to the restoration industry and can be reached at map@wondermakers.com.

Author's Note: A great shout out to my friend Tom Laubenthal who provided me with some of his favorite links and inspired me to put this article together for all of my colleagues and friends in the restoration industry. If you ever want to talk to a true environmental expert, and a naturally hilarious guy, Tom is your man.