Mold can grow on any surface in the HVAC system. Mold requires moisture and organic material for nourishment, as well as other growing requirements that vary by mold type and species.

**Fiberglass Reservoirs** - There are very high levels of mold contamination in otherwise apparently clean fiberglass insulation in cases where the insulation has been exposed to high levels of moldy air.

**Mold Reservoir** - Created when an area is moldy or wet, releasing spores of mold into the surrounding insulation and ductwork, creating a large mold reservoir in exposed fiberglass insulation.

**Wet or dirty building insulation**
Often is found to be moldy, either on the paper or foil side of insulation backing or in the insulation itself. When such insulation is wet by an event such as a roof leak or when it is exposed to reoccurring interior moisture conditions, the growth of problem mold is a real risk.

**Personal Protection**

**Respiratory Protection** – When in a wet or moldy environment, a respirator is recommended with cartridges rated for both organic chemicals and fine particulates. Use of half face-piece or full face-piece respirators requires an exposure assessment from EHS to determine whether the employee should be enrolled in Respiratory Protection Program which involves medical surveillance, fit-testing, & training.

**Eye Protection** – In a dusty area, goggles are best. In a low dust area, safety glasses are suitable and provide an advantage of less “fog-up” in a humid work area.

**Gloves** – Provides protection and comfort especially if there is a need to crawl in small areas. Choose an appropriate glove for the job. Wet areas should call for a rubber padded glove.

**Knee pads** – Provides protection and extra comfort while in a crawl space. The thickness of these pads keeps the legs and knees off of damp work surfaces.

**Protective Clothing** – Coveralls, Tyvek Suit, Padded clothing.
Head Protection – Depending on the space to be worked on, it may be impractical to wear head protection. A soft padded cap should be worn to minimize skin, eye, and hair exposure.

Confined Space Protection

Cell Phone or Two Way Radio – In the case of an emergency or to summon help

Flashlight – A battery operated flashlight works if the work extends far from the entry point. Carrying an extra flashlight is very helpful if the first flashlight fails or falls into an area where it cannot be retrieved.

Assistant or “Buddy” – Do not enter a confined or unsafe space alone. Have an assistant remain at the entry point and maintain contact through Cell Phones or through a Two Way Radio.

Inspection for moldy crawl spaces

Do Not Enter - or work in a moldy area without wearing proper respiratory and other personal protection (Tyvek suit, gloves, loose clothing).

Evaluate the history of water entry – Dampness or poor ventilation. Listing the factors conducive to growth such as:

1. Present or past wet conditions, whether "once" or reoccurring water entry
2. Venting a crawl space can actually increase its moisture level. A preferred approach is to dry out, enclose, and seal a crawl space.
3. Exposed dirt. If the crawl space has a dirt floor, put down a 6-mil plastic layer over the dirt to reduce moisture from the soil near the crawl space.
4. Presence of exposed fiberglass, look for deterioration or damage.
5. Plumbing leaks or improper ventilation.

Look for visible mold:

1. Inspect the exposed insulation in the structure including all HVAC Ductwork.
2. Inspect for possible mold reservoirs near the area.

Visual confirmation of mold - Professional mold remediation should be called in if an area larger than 30 sq ft. of visibly mold material is present.