

Put Concrete Block In - Keep Unhealthy Mold Out!



Got Mold? Exterior residential walls built of concrete masonry have many documented advantages: they don't burn; they don't rot; their structural safety factor is MUCH higher than other building systems; the insurance premiums are 15-20% lower; your chance of termite damage is zero%; they are energy efficient; you have unlimited design flexibility with color and texture; etc. etc. etc. There is an additional advantage to concrete masonry construction which has been steadily increasing in importance over the past few years and is gradually becoming the top reason to build with block – **MOLD RESISTANCE.**

Experts are unsure of the exact reason for this alarming increase in mold damage to residential structures (AND commercial buildings). With the current surge in residential construction there are a number of factors working in favor of mold. First, Florida is a wet

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state. The past rainy season has been one of the wettest on record, thus the high levels of Lake Okeechobee. In addition, the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) tells us that homes are 50% more energy efficient than they were just 30 years ago and that this has been accomplished largely by tightening the building envelope.



Mold damage on wood frame construction pictured above.

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This trend of tighter and tighter homes has continued with each new iteration of the building code. Small amounts of water leak or condense inside the wall and cannot find a pathway out. This potential build-up of moisture combined with an increased use of moisture sensitive materials such as paper-faced drywall and fiber insulation provides an ideal setting for mold growth.

Another possible reason for the rise of mold problems is the universal use of centralized HVAC systems. Besides becoming breeding grounds for mold, leaky ducts and exhaust fans can depressurize the house pulling in unwanted moisture through exterior walls and windows.

Finally, as residential construction in the State ramps up under the pressures of tight cost and production schedules, there is always the potential for increased design and workmanship flaws.

Regardless of the cause, the problems associated with water damage and mold growth in wood frame walls is dramatically increasing and may not be visible for years after construction.

* Source: "KB Home Estimates Defect Repairs to Cost \$13.2 Million" Builder Online www.builderonline.com August 21, 2013

This problem is **not** increasing in block homes. Concrete block is not a food source for mold nor does it support mold growth in any way. Additionally, if mold begins to grow on something attached to the block, like dirt, the mold and dirt can be easily and permanently removed by simple, inexpensive cleaning methods. Many of masonry's competitive building materials cannot be cleansed of mold - PERIOD - and require complete removal and replacement. This can lead to big problems becoming HUGE problems.

KB Homes recently has reserved over \$43 million (approx. \$51,000 per home) to repair damage caused by leaky wood frame walls.*

The two top builders of two-story homes in Florida have both recently switched to masonry second floors. All of the top three builders in Florida are nearly 100% first floor masonry. These mega-builders and other builders across Central and South Florida are coming to the conclusion that perfect construction of wood frame walls is just NOT GOING TO HAPPEN and are switching to block construction as a solution to the liability of moisture damage and mold.

And why not come home to block? Concrete block construction is no more than a 1-2% cost increase over wood frame construction. It not only offers you protection against mold. Concrete block is the Florida choice in every dimension of beauty, comfort and security. Mold, hurricanes, fire, termites - you name it - block walls are the answer.



Build your next home with a 100% pure Florida product **BUILD WITH BLOCK!**

Learn more about the benefits of building with concrete block, including the "Seven Reasons to Design and Build with Concrete Block". Visit www.buildwithblock.com or contact the Masonry Association of Florida, Inc. info@floridamasonry.com or 561-310-9902.