For Immediate Release
July 14, 2014

NWCAA launches effort to fight mold before the cold
Agency pledges to reach 130 apartment buildings before winter

The Northwest Clean Air Agency is launching a mold prevention campaign, focusing on making contact with at least 130 multi-unit apartment complexes in Island, Skagit and Whatcom counties by winter.

“Our goals are to help tenants protect their own health, and rental property owners protect their property,” said NWCAA indoor air specialist David Blake.

Mold can be unhealthy and expensive to remove, and it’s usually preventable.

Exposure to mold can cause stuffy noses, irritated eyes, wheezing and rashes. Severe reactions can include fever, shortness of breath, and, for people who have chronic lung illnesses, mold infections in the lungs. Recent studies suggest early mold exposure could potentially be linked to development of asthma in some children, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control.

To clean up mold, property owners might have to cut out and patch drywall, replace flooring and carpeting, repair beams, or install sumps, drainage and ventilation to get it out and keep it out.

Blake is making the push to get information out before people close up their homes and turn on their heat. He said people are often so worried about keeping heat in that they don’t realize they are trapping moisture inside, too, promoting condensation on cool surfaces like windows, corners and closets in exterior walls. Anything that gets wet from condensation or leaks will help mold grow.

“Replacing warm, wet indoor air with cold outside air by opening doors and windows for 5 minutes or less will greatly reduce condensation and resulting mold,” Blake said. “You’ll only lose about 2 percent of your heat, and that’s a bargain compared to the cost and trouble of letting mold take over.”

NWCAA is focusing on contacting apartment building owners, managers and maintenance personnel who can share the information with tenants. NWCAA is offering free training and information, including a detailed brochure, DVD, and workshops by request.

More information:
- Indoor Air Quality program, including brochures and videos in English and Spanish: www.nwcleanair.org/agPrograms/indoorAir.htm
- Social media: Facebook www.facebook.com/nwcleanair and Twitter @NWCleanAir

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The Northwest Clean Air Agency is responsible for enforcing federal, state and local air quality regulations in Island, Skagit and Whatcom counties. In addition to permitting and regulating industrial sources of air pollution, the agency offers services that deal with asbestos, business assistance, climate change, indoor air quality, outdoor burning, woodstoves and fireplaces. More information about the agency is available at www.nwcleanair.org.