

ATTENTION ALL LOCAL 4304 MEMBERS

Mould has been identified in buses 2203 and 2719 in a Pinchin Environmental Microbiology Laboratory Certificate of Analysis. (Attached)

The types of mould identified are:

- *Alternaria sp.*
- *Cladosporium sp.*
- *Epicoccum sp.*
- *Pithomyces sp.*
- *Hyphal Fragments*
- *Rusts*

Hyphal fragments: refer to fragments of the filamentous structures (hyphae) that make up the body of moulds by branching extensively to form a complex network called mycelium.

Definition of mycelium : The body of a fungus, composed of many threads of tissue. Mushrooms do not reproduce by seed, but by spores. The spores germinate to produce threadlike structures known as hyphae. Collectively, a mass of hyphae are known as the mycelium.

Rust: refer to spores produced by rust fungi. Rust fungi are also plant pathogens and are unlikely to have an indoor source.

What health effects can moulds cause?

Mould can produce toxic substances known as mycotoxins. Some mycotoxins adhere to the mould spores while others can be found within the spore itself. Air movement and the handling of contaminated material can release spores containing mycotoxins into the atmosphere. Once released, spores must contact the skin or be inhaled before symptoms can develop.

- Exposure to toxic moulds **may irritate skin, eyes, nose, and throat, resulting in symptoms such as difficulty in breathing, runny nose, and watery eyes,**
- Other symptoms such as **fatigue and headache** have also been reported,
- Workers who are allergic to moulds could experience **asthmatic attacks** upon exposure,
- Workers exposed to *Stachybotrys* have additionally experienced burning in the nose, nosebleeds, severe coughing, and impairment of the immune system. *Stachybotrys* does not cause infection and is not spread from person to person.
- People with **weakened immune systems are particularly susceptible to mould-related illness** and should not be involved in removing mould or investigating areas that may be mould-contaminated.

<http://www.environmentalhazards.com/mold-fungus/Workplace-Guidelines-OHSCO.htm>

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There is a strong chance that mould may be present in all of our buses. Please protect your health by following the suggested practices until this situation can be further investigated and resolved:

- **Do not use the overhead air conditioning diffuser or blowers.**
- **Keep your window open.**
- **Use the dash fans to cool off.**
- **Open the roof vents of the bus.**
- **Immediately report and change off any bus emitting an odour.**

More information will be posted as this situation progresses.

In Solidarity

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