

Breaking the Mold

Q I live in a prewar cooperative in Manhattan. As a result of a number of leaks during the past few years from either the apartment upstairs or pipes from inside the building's walls, a black wet substance has filled part of my bathroom and bedroom walls and ceiling. When attempting to fix the leaks a contractor lowered the ceiling and we observed that a black wet substance has basically expanded throughout the entire ceiling of my bedroom. In addition, I have been ill on and off for many months, which I believe may be caused by this substance. I also have incurred expenses in having said bathroom and ceiling repaired, Is my cooperative responsible for removing said fungus? Is my cooperative responsible for repairing the bathroom and ceiling? Is my cooperative responsible for my doctor's bills?

--Manhattan Shareholder

A According to Adam Leitman Bailey of the Law Offices of Adam Leitman Bailey PC in Manhattan "The condition in your apartment may be mold. Mold complaints/cases have increased considerably in the last few years. Mold usually consists of a black fungus that may include a foul stench that spreads through areas that may be damp where little ventilation is available. In many cases, mold can be alleviated by bleach and water but in more severe cases like the one you describe you may require an expert in the on the subject to analyze and remove the mold.

"In New York City by calling 311 you may request a trained inspector from the Department of Health or you may call the Department of Health directly to inspect your dwelling to determine if mold exists in your apartment. Also, many private inspectors are trained in detecting and removing mold. Because mold can cause a serious illness, I highly recommend that it be determined if mold is present in your apartment from a qualified expert.

