



FORENSIC APPLICATIONS CONSULTING TECHNOLOGIES, INC.



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## **MOULD (MOLD)!**

Due to our scientifically based consulting style, Forensic Applications Consulting Technologies, Inc. (FACTs) receives a lot of correspondence from confused members of the “Toxic Mould is Gold” camp.

## **INTRODUCTION to the MOULD INDUSTRY**

Currently, in the U.S., there are two competing “industries” involved in indoor moulds:

- A fear-based “toxic mould” industry that relies on scare tactics, science fiction and myths
- An objective, evidence-based, scientifically valid, medically accepted profession

### ***Fear-Based "Toxic Mould" Industry***

The fear-based, anti-scientific “Toxic Mould is Gold” industry is a newly formed “industry” based on bogus “mould testing,” junk science, myth, hyperbole, and pseudo “standards.”

The practitioners of the junk-science based industry include discredited medical practitioners<sup>1</sup> and field personnel who frequently refer to themselves as “Certified Mould Inspectors” (CMI) or “Certified Mould Professionals” (CMP) or “Certified Microbial Consultants” (CMC), “Certified Mechanical Hygienists” or other unrecognized, self appointed “certificates.”

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<sup>1</sup> OAH No. L2003120323, File No. 05-2001-124743, In the Matter of the Second Amended Accusation Against: Gary Ordog, M.D. Certificate No. G 43038; Timothy S. Thomas, Administrative Law Judge Before The Division Of Medical Quality Medical Board Of California Department Of Consumer Affairs State Of California; April 11, 2006 (Dr. Ordog was subsequently banned from testifying as an expert witness until 2013).

In most US States, a child of 12 years with no training in mould, mycology, Industrial Hygiene, or microbiology, could sit down at their computer and print out a “certificate” on their home computer identifying themselves as a “Certified Microbial Consultant” or “Certified Mycological Consultant” or any number of other self-appointed titles, and lawfully use the initials “CMC” or any of the some 40 different self appointed titles, and offer their “expertise” in mould assessments and sampling.

There is nothing about being a “Certified Mould Whatzit” that indicates any specialized knowledge in indoor moulds or microbials. In fact, in general, in our experience, those who identify themselves as “Certified Mechanical Hygienists” and CMCs, or CMLs, CPCs, Certified ABCs, or Certified XYZs, etc, are the practitioners least likely to possess any legitimate specialized knowledge about moulds, indoor air quality, toxicology, human exposure issues, or any other related sciences.

Usually, it is only untrained and unscrupulous “certified” mould consultants who collect “samples” and perform “testing” typically seen at properties. Almost invariably, these untrained consultants ultimately ignore the results of their samples (usually because they don’t know how to interpret the results) and recommend extreme and unnecessary “mould remediation” – often citing the notoriously nonsensical IICRC S520 “standard” as their basis of decision making.

The fear-based industry has no national guidelines, no national regulatory oversight, no accepted standards of practice and no recognized professional standing or authority. Practitioners of the fear-based industry, tend to bamboozle their victims by creating their own “standard industry practices” as they progress through a project.

The fear based “toxic mould is gold” practitioner abhors science, abhors objective facts, and is deeply seeped in emotive arguments about medical conspiracies, insurance cover-ups, black helicopters and mysterious medical diagnosis that can only be made by an handful of specialty medical doctors who magically are the only medical practitioners “who truly understand mould illnesses.” These practitioners feed off the fear they induce, and mostly make their money by feeding into the “victimhood” profile often seen in their victims.

### ***Science Based Industrial Hygiene Community***

The fact-based, objective, medically accepted and scientifically-founded assessment profession, on the other hand, is that which is practiced by ethical, knowledgeable Industrial Hygienists, Mycologists, Microbiologists, and other recognized professionals.

These individuals virtually never have the words “mould” or “mold” or other related terms in their professional titles.

These legitimate professionals when engaged in mould assessments follow standard accepted practices and, according to those practices, virtually never collect air samples, tape lift samples, bulk samples or other “tests” for moulds during indoor mould related assessments.

The fact-based scientific community has regulatory oversight, internationally accepted standards, peer reviewed published literature and international recognition. The U.S. Institute of Medicine (IOM) specifically identifies the “Industrial Hygienist” *exclusively* as



the professional of choice for assessments for individual patients with suspected indoor-related health problems.<sup>2</sup> The US EPA explicitly references the Industrial Hygiene profession as the profession of choice, and references publications of the AIHA and the ACGIH, for mould related issues.

Nowhere in legitimate documents do we find allusions to “certified mechanical hygienists” or CMIs, CMCs, CPCs, or the myriad of other “3-day wonder” certificates.

Recently, on the public internet forum “LinkedIn,” I posted a short discussion on the issue of respirators. Since it involved an aspect of mould, it almost guaranteed the emergence of the nuttier side of the internet. A copy of the discussion is available directly from [LinkedIn](#) or, alternatively, one may find the PDF version on our website [here](#).

One of the responses received is reproduced here:

*Jim Pearson  
Owner and Certified Mechanical Hygienist*

*Caoimhín P. Connell, I believe there is a bit of truth to what you are getting at...over-protection. I also believe the numbers you are reporting are wildly exaggerated and not representative of the levels currently found...both outdoors and indoors. 32,500 spores/m<sup>3</sup> of ANY type of mold is far from a "measly" amount. Further, I have never seen outdoor air containing anywhere near this amount! You may have 14 references but if you drew your facts from them, they are either out of date, misrepresented, or simply wrong. In fact, I'll bet you will find the vast majority of mold specialists are in complete disagreement with the statements in you have made in your article.*

## **CERTIFIED CERTIFICATE CERTIFIER**

This response is typical for a variety of reasons and replete with logical fallacies; let's begin with the title – “Certified Mechanical Hygienist.”

The last time I encountered this “certification,” it was from a Toxic Mould is Gold practitioner who falsely claimed he was a “Certified Industrial Hygienist.”<sup>TM</sup> When he was caught lying, he hastily changed the initials and claimed he *really* meant to say he was a Certified *Mechanical* Hygienist. (When I looked into that claim, it too turned out to be false.)

However, let's look at the claimed “certification.” What is a “Certified Mechanical Hygienist?” I confess I don't know either, and it would seem to be a mystery in general. One reference stated the title was registered with The US Department of Commerce's

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<sup>2</sup> Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Academy of Sciences *Damp Indoor Spaces and Health*, Section 3, EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT Washington DC, IOM, 2004



United States Patent and Trademark Office; however attempts to find the title through the USPTO were unsuccessful.

In the case of Mr. Pearson, the “certification” (see below) appears to have been issued in 1997 by an organization called “Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration;” an organization that appears to now be defunct.



Image Reproduced from the Internet<sup>3</sup>

Attempts to contact the “Association of Specialists in Cleaning and Restoration” are unsuccessful and redirect to an organization called “Restoration Industry Association, Inc. (RIA).” Attempts to contact the RIA by phone have been unsuccessful and I was informed that the phones for the RIA are handled by an independent answering service.

Not to worry – fortunately the RIA has a web function that allows one to search for “certified” personnel. However, I tried typing in “James Pearson,” “Jim Pearson,” and the name of his company and/or zip code and several variations on the theme – no matter the combinations or permutation I tried, I always received the same result:

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<sup>3</sup> Possible but unknown Copyright - used here without permission under the “fair use” doctrine as described in US Code, Title 17 Section 107 “criticism,” “teaching,” “reporting,” and “scholarship.”





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NO DATA AVAILABLE<sup>4</sup>

So, the RIA doesn't seem to know that Mr. Pearson is a "Certified Mechanical Whatzit." So, I scoured the net looking for other individuals who also call themselves "certified mechanical hygienists" I was successful in finding only three (obviously an elite group, to be sure).

I typed in those names and the RIA system found them – but curiously, it never found them under the title "Certified Mechanical Hygienist." In fact, not only could I not find that the RIA identifies Mr. Pearson as a "Certified Mechanical Hygienist" I could not find that the RIA even has a title called "Certified Mechanical Hygienist." Truly I don't know if there is such a certification as "Certified Mechanical Hygienist."

If we look closely, we see Mr. Pearson's "certificate" was issued by the Mechanical Systems Hygiene Institute (MSHI). So, who the heck is the "Mechanical Systems Hygiene Institute"? I don't know either. I suppose we could ask Mr. Pearson since according to Mr. Pearson's web site, Mr. Pearson was Past President of the "Mechanical Systems Hygiene Institute." Did Mr. Pearson issue himself the "certification?" I don't know – is it even important? That too, I confess, I don't know.

Other than that, all I could ascertain is that that the "certificates" are mostly self-referential, and there is nothing to indicate that the "certificate" has anything to do with mould, mould exposures, or any biologically related science. In truth, I was not able to identify exactly what the "certification" was suppose to certify.

Now, I honestly don't know anything about the RIA or the MSHI – they may be a bunch of really great mechanical engineers, or outstanding HVAC designers or even janitors,

<sup>4</sup> Possible but unknown Copyright - used here without permission under the "fair use" doctrine as described in US Code, Title 17 Section 107 "criticism," "teaching," "reporting," and "scholarship."



cleaners, or some such, and it is not my intention to poke fun at them. But with over 30 years as an Industrial Hygienist, I can't find a lick of information that would indicate that "Certified Mechanical Hygienists" are in anyway recognized by anyone as having demonstrated any kind of proficiency in an biologically related subject matter.

## **FACTS – INCONVENIENT TRUTHS**

The fact that the "Certified Toxic Mould Crusader" (CTMC) dislikes objective facts and realities is not only evidenced by their titles, but also by their otherwise unsupportable positions. Let's look at Mr. Pearson's comments:

*I also believe the numbers you are reporting are wildly exaggerated and not representative of the levels currently found...both outdoors and indoors. 32,500 spores/m3 of ANY type of mold is far from a "measly" amount.*

The values I referenced in my article were taken from actual peer-reviewed scientific papers – as such, these are not likely to be read or understood by CTMCs. For the CTMC, *beliefs* trump facts, and feelings trump beliefs. Therefore, if a legitimate researcher identifies a particular spore concentration during a legitimate study and reports those values in a legitimate peer-reviewed article, those values become suspect by the Certified Mechanical Hygienist who may merely *believe* the data are "*wildly exaggerated and not representative of the levels currently found*" and POOF! The researchers are wrong.

Mr. Pearson then goes on to say:

*Further, I have never seen outdoor air containing anywhere near this amount!*

Well, that is easily explained – if Mr. Pearson had any legitimate knowledge or experience in indoor moulds, or their occurrence or their presence, then he would have seen those kinds of counts. One would not expect a "Certified Mechanical Hygienist" to have any experience in such matters, and therefore, it is not surprising that Mr. Pearson otherwise has no such experiences.

## **OLD GUYS RULE**

According to Mr. Pearson,

*You may have 14 references but if you drew your facts from them, they are either out of date, misrepresented, or simply wrong.*

WHOOSH! With the swipe of a keyboard, a Certified Mechanical Hygienist can simply wipe away the data of legitimate researchers; according to Mr. Pearson, folks like S. Rautiala, and Tinna Reponen and A. Hyvärinen and Chin Yang, and Coreen Robbins and Bryan Hardin and Bruce Kelman, and Ron Gotts and all those other know-nothings are just wrong and have wildly exaggerated their data (which Mr. Pearson has never even seen). WHOOSH! The magic of the CTMC in action and getting rid of all those pesky facts!



And besides, according to Mr. Pearson – my references to scientific articles from 2009, and 2008 etc, are “*outdated*” – so says the guy with an untraceable 1997 “certificate” from an apparently long defunct organization. WHOOSH! Another stroke of magic brought to you by the CTMC.

For those who may be interested, you can read my [OLD GUYS RULE](#) discussion to understand this logical fallacy.

## **CONSENSUS**

Thus, in conclusion, there is one thing upon which Mr. Pearson and I will be able to agree:

*In fact, I'll bet you will find the vast majority of mold specialists are in complete disagreement with the statements in you have made in your article.*

Since Mr. Pearson identifies “mould specialists” as the CRMIs, and the CTMCs, and the CMCs, and the CMHs, and the CRMPs, and the other untrained toxic mould practitioners as “mold specialists” – yes, they will definitely disagree with me.

However, microbiologists, mycologists, Industrial Hygienists, medical practitioners, legitimate researchers, those who actually know something about indoor moulds and the over whelming body of science will be in agreement with my points.

## **CONCLUSION**

I would like to thank Mr. Pearson for his comments – without them, I probably would not have had an opportunity to discuss these issues.

As such, I would welcome other similar comments.

