

# Smart Words for Smart Homeowners

THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERTS AND THEIR ADVICE ON RELEVANT HOMEOWNER TOPICS

## Eliminating Bathroom Mold Problems

### Overview

Aside from privacy, water is the main focus of a contemporary bathroom. Why is it then, that water is the in the forefront of most bathroom damage? We don't like non sequiturs in life and have negotiated with this practical dilemma for centuries. Over time water damage, mold or mildew will arrive in your home. This may not become conspicuous until you take the time to inspect or begin a renovation. Removing old fixtures, floor tiles, old tubs and old showers is the first way to discover water born problems.

### Why Do These Problems Occur?

The shifting and settling of the fixtures and infrastructure, allow minute cracks to appear and otherwise water tight integrity. In some cases grout failure is being caused by aggressive, even caustic, ingredients of modern "tile and tub cleaners." In other cases shoddy materials or inferior workmanship could be the culprit.

### Over The Long Term

The longevity of the structure can be threatened by constant dampness. Water and moisture entry, when left unchecked, will damage walls, floor joists and sub flooring. Moisture and condensation will weaken and compromise any wood it meets. If left unchecked the interior walls will be damaged. Sheet rock will be damaged, studs behind walls will be dampened and damaged. Moisture and dampness, will support mold or mildew and begin to rot unseen wood. These are unhealthy conditions for humans and pets. These conditions also threaten the durability of the home. The

detrimental effects will reduce a home's market value.

### Don't Ignore Loose Caulk

In a nutshell, caulk is used in a bathroom, tub or shower enclosure to keep water from creeping up, under, through or around the tiles at joints between tile and the tub or shower pan, or on joints where walls meet. It is also used on wood trim to keep drafts out and provide a finished seamless appearance prior to painting.

Leaky caulk and the open crease it leaves, is not to be ignored! I have seen tiled bathrooms where the two or three bottom rows of tiles were loosened by water which crept through small tile joints. The repair can be time-consuming and very expensive. And you might not be able to use the enclosure again for a week or more while things "dry out" and are replaced.



### Phenoseal® Is A Vinyl Adhesive Caulk

About Good Caulk; we use a caulk named Phenoseal® for most jobs because it is true to its reputation for outstanding adhesion, great sealing, mold resistance and "paintability." Unlike other caulks it is vinyl. It is used for bonding, caulking and sealing. It sticks to most common building materials: tile to metal, fiberglass to wood, concrete to stone, metal to glass, wood to foam insulation, etc. It also sticks to itself, while a silicone alone does not. It costs about \$6.00 a tube versus about \$3.00 for sub-par

caulking alternatives that are not vinyl. No contest. (<http://www.phenoseal.com>)

As a bonding agent, Phenoseal® makes a joint that is usually stronger than the original material. We use it when hanging crown molding also because it works to fill in the imperfections of matting ceilings and walls to wood surfaces. As a caulk, Phenoseal® contracts and expands to seal joints of 1/4 inch or less. Because it will stand some movement it is ideal for moist environments.



As a sealant, Phenoseal® keeps water and air from penetrating cracks and seams, helping to prevent energy loss and the entry of dust.

Because it is water based, Phenoseal® is easy to use and easy to clean up before it cures! It cures by the evaporation of its water content. Once cured, it is at its maximum strength. This cured caulk resists mildew, some oils, paint thinner, gasoline, asphalt, antifreeze, soap, rust, corrosion, salt water, even mild acids and alkalis. It can be painted with oil or water based paints and coatings.

### You Need To Be Aware And Attentive

When the Damage Is Done You can't "turn a blind eye" to a problem that starts out of your view. If the damage is done and extensive call a contractor or a bathroom remodeler. Get an estimate from at least three sources. Remodeling a bathroom is always inconvenient. Why not protect your investment now.

### Reminders For Best Caulking Results

- Always caulk in temperatures above 50°F.
- Don't apply it to dirty, wet or damp surfaces.
- Surface must be dry and clean before application.

- Do not apply when rain or freezing temperatures is forecasted before full cure can occur.
- Don't use it for marine or automotive applications or below the waterline. There are special chemistry caulks and adhesives for that.
- Don't use it for filling butt joints, surface defects or for tuck-pointing bricks.
- Not for use between two non-porous surfaces or with mirrors. There are special chemistry caulks and adhesives for that.
- The open joint size should not exceed 1/4" wide x 1/4" deep.
- If the joint depth exceeds 1/4", use backer rod material.
- Store all caulk away from extreme heat or cold.
- Tooling Time is less than 7 minutes.
- Tack-free Time is ≈ 30 - 45 minutes in most cases. Full cure in 24 - 36 hours.
- Dynamic Joint Movement: ± 25%.
- Paintable: Yes. In ≈ 3 - 5 hours.
- Vehicle is an Advanced Acrylic Polymer.



### Proper Application

- Surface must be clean, dry and free of dust and old caulk.
- Cut nozzle at 45° angle to desired bead size.
- If using the 10 oz. cartridge, load it into a caulking gun.
- Apply caulk to surface, pushing a bead of caulk ahead of the nozzle.
- Move caulk into the crack with a damp finger.
- For a neat finish, smooth the bead of caulk with a damp finger. Move moist finger sliding over and across the caulked crevice.
- Clean up excess caulk with a damp finger and damp sponge before it skins over (≈ 7 minutes).



