

Patricia D. Hastings

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Subject: Man Arrested for Defrauding Connecticut Schools in Mold Remediation Plot

Excerpted from Press Advisory - EPA's latest developments;
 News for Release: (Washington, D.C. -- July 28, 2004). *See resources for mold including a downloadable booklet for schools following EPA's press advisory.*

Man Arrested for Defrauding Connecticut Schools in Mold Remediation Plot
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Ronald Schongar of Clifton Park, N.Y., was arrested on Jul. 15 for alleged mail fraud, wire fraud and violation of **the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)**. Schongar stands accused of providing **unnecessary mold remediation at schools in Easton, Manchester and Bristol, Connecticut**. Schongar owns and operates Microb Phase, Inc., and several other entities that advertise air quality testing and mold remediation services. Court documents charge that, as early as 2000, the defendant plotted to defraud Connecticut schools by allegedly generating false and fraudulent laboratory reports about school air quality and offering Microb Phase's services to remediate the purported air quality problems. Furthermore, he falsely and fraudulently represented that the product he used in his remediation program was approved by EPA, and generated false and fraudulent reports indicating his services and products had successfully remediated the air quality problems he claimed to have identified. If convicted of mail and wire fraud, Schongar faces a maximum possible sentence of up to five years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine on each count. If convicted of violating FIFRA, the maximum sentence calls for up to one year in prison and/or a fine of up to \$25,000 per count. The case was investigated by the New Haven, Conn., Office of EPA's Criminal Investigation Division and the Easton Police Department with the assistance of EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center. It is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office in New Haven, Conn. Federal charges are merely an accusation, and all defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty in a court of law.

Background: Molds belong to the kingdom Fungi. Hence, fungicides developed for mold remediation should be EPA registered under FIFRA. Fungicides and fungistats are intended to inhibit the growth of, or destroy fungi (including yeasts) pathogenic to man or other animals on inanimate surfaces. Disinfectants are intended to destroy or irreversibly inactivate infectious or other undesirable bacteria, pathogenic fungi, or viruses on surfaces or inanimate objects. Sterilizers intended to destroy viruses and all living bacteria, fungi, and their spores, on inanimate surfaces.

Resources:

- For more details on this particular incident, see 'Investigators Arrest Microb Phase President'. By: Bill Bittar, Associate Editor 07/22/2004; [FAIRFIELD MINUTEMAN @ http://www.ipminstitute.org/Articles/arrest.htm](http://www.ipminstitute.org/Articles/arrest.htm)
- See EPA website 'Asthma Triggers - Molds'; <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/asthma/triggers/molds.html>
- **"Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings"** online @ http://www.epa.gov/mold/mold_remediation.html; or download @ <http://www.epa.gov/mold/images/moldremediation.pdf>

- See CDC site on Mold (English and Spanish) <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/mold/default.htm>
 - Label Requirements for Antimicrobial Pesticides Used On Hard Surfaces@ http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/dis_tss_docs/dis-15.htm
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See PMO websites @ <http://www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu>

NJinPAS Listserv Archive @ <http://www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/NJinPAS/listservpostings.asp>

See Farm Safety website @ <http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/farmsafety/>