



Excellence in Customer Service
(National)



Contractor of the Year

SitexOrbis
property & people protection 24/7

Know the spore

Ventilation, damp, mould & condensation
Mark Cosh explains some of the key issues surrounding mould growth and offers advice on creating healthy homes.

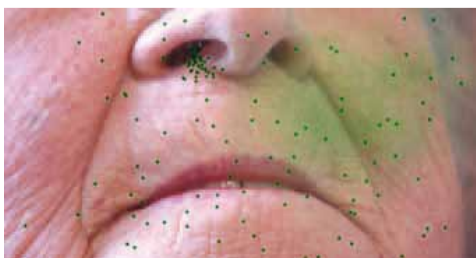
When it comes to getting rid of mould, two unpleasant elements are often left behind. For one, this is probably because it has previously been difficult to deal with, for the other, there's always been the hope that it will disappear unaided eventually.

The first unpleasantness is spores, invisible to the naked eye as they float through the air to start a new mould infestation. When inhaled, they can be a potential health hazard for asthma sufferers and those with respiratory illness, and can even be a contributory factor to the diseases' initial development. This is one reason for mould's listing alongside asbestos as a potential health hazard in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

The second frequent 'leave behind' is the mustiness created by mould – a smell that can put off visitors and potential tenants. Thankfully, there is now a very thorough and fast way of removing both nuisances, which has other health advantages too.

Hygienic properties

At SitexOrbis, we look after a lot of properties that need to be as hygienic as possible and require a means of getting rid of both known and hidden infections quickly. We've all heard of fluids that kill 99.9% of germs, but we introduced DuoMax that went a bit further and killed 99.9999%. The process of application is vaporisation, which is not only fast, but gets the germ-killing liquid into the air where it can kill airborne pathogens and those on hard to reach surfaces.



The treatment is proven to kill all known pathogens with minimum disruption in a matter of hours. Spores, fungi, yeasts and all kinds of bacteria and viruses capable of causing such headline making illnesses as salmonella spp, E.coli, listeria, MRSA, C difficile and swine flu can be exterminated. We use it routinely to treat NHS vehicles and school buildings and to help keep professional footballers safe from infection while training as well as others who use communal facilities.

The same vaporisation process was used to treat rooms with mould and people have been pleasantly surprised to find that as well as getting rid of spores as expected, it also gets rid of musty smells. In empty houses, for example, where foodstuffs often including milk have been left out for months, strong smells disappear immediately after the vaporisation treatment. Swabs taken before and after confirm the reduction in the levels of ATP.

Whereas common disinfectants disable organisms by changing the external membrane temporarily, this process kills by breaking through cell walls and destroying DNA and RNA. The antibacterial agent used is non-corrosive, non-tainting, non-hazardous, bleach-free, kinder to the environment and safe for people and animals.

So impressed are we with the results that we've made vaporisation part of our standard mould eradication service.



The extra effort is worth it. Mould is a major problem, affecting some 10% of homes in the UK. Left unchecked and with the right conditions, it can blacken rooms, destroy fixtures and fittings and affect residents' health.

Identifying the causes

Impressive as the vaporisation is, it still needs to be part of a thorough mould eradication process. This involves first identifying the cause or causes. Favourite conditions for growth are damp humid conditions where the relative humidity is greater than 70%, the temperature is ideally between 10-35°C and the air is still.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, infestations can frequently appear in kitchens, bathrooms and in the corners of external walls where warm and cold air meet. Woodchip wallpaper also provides an ideal place for mould to spread, as moisture gets contained within the wood, paper and adhesive, providing a great source of food. As such, sites need to be surveyed to measure the moisture content of walls and to check if there are any damp-causing defects.

Importantly, as well as removing mould from the surface, the 80-90% that lies beneath must also be treated to avoid mould returning quickly. Merely scrubbing won't do. Fungicides and biocides must be applied to halt growth, followed by vaporisation for a completely thorough job.



Rated in
Top Products 2010

SitexOrbis' mould removal solution has proven popular among social landlords as it offers a complete service at good value.

HABM Magazine
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Mark Cosh

European director at SitexOrbis.

BIFM AWARDS 2010

DAVID ARMINAS

CATEGORY: INNOVATION IN PRODUCTS

WINNER: SITEXORBIS



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UNLOCKING SIMPLICITY

We used to think of a 'skeleton key' as something of an impossible dream in FM. But the eMAKS system from SitexOrbis has opened the door to electronic access systems

The eMAKS access system from SitexOrbis won the award because it streamlined working methods and made positive changes to FM operations, a true definition of innovation.

Britain is also the first European country to use the eMAKS, thanks to a decision by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to roll out the system after a year's trial.

The two major themes at this year's BIFM conference were "More for Less" and "Reducing Emissions". This is exactly what eMAKS does, according to SitexOrbis group chief executive David Walker. "If there is one overriding benefit that sells the system, it's time saving for the client as well their contractors."

On the surface, the 'electronically managed access key system' looks like a normal key. In fact, eMAKS is "one key for up to 6,000 locks".

The key is not much larger than the average car key, but has a round connector instead of a conventional toothed metal strip. Keys are electronically encrypted and are programmed to unlock specific doors at specific times, and report back when this has happened.

The system's locks don't require direct power and are opened by inserting an authorised key.

Authorisation is done through a BS5979 Cat II accredited response centre that operates 24-7.

Authorisation ports transfer authorisation settings from the response centre to the key. This can be done through a USB on laptops and PDAs. Alternatively, keys can be updated through an infra-red link, or even a smart phone such as a Blackberry.

Potential clients include housing associations and boroughs, such as Nuneaton, that manage hundreds of void properties to which employees and maintenance contractors need access, especially just before a tenant moves in.

Also, electricity distribution network operators must manage access to their disbursed buildings – EDF Energy has 66,300 substations across 11 counties.

Up to 6,000 vacant properties can be fitted with simple eMAKS locks on their front doors. These replace conventional door locks and can work without any power source. Property managers have their own eMAKS key and contractors are given temporary keys that access properties only during specific times.

Clients programme the keys by calling the SitexOrbis response centre and then plugging their keys into an authorisation port,



which then downloads the latest access settings, and uploads recent activity – for example, what doors were opened and when.

Walker noted that the technology is not necessarily new. What is new is the software development that allows data collection, authorisation and re-programming of keys.

Key values

SitexOrbis acknowledges it saved on development costs by making use of existing technology for use within the key itself, and invested another £20,000 in developing and testing the all-important locks that require no external power or network connections.

SitexOrbis's main investment was in the support aspect of the system, said Walker. Central to the system is a combination of online technology and 24/7 response centre support which allows customers, their contractors and employees to request and receive access rights within minutes.

SitexOrbis spent £500,000 building a response centre that has highest BS5979 Cat II accreditation for call and data management.

No longer do FM's, maintenance staff and contractors spend hours driving about to collect keys, or wait for someone to show up with

a key. Also from a security point of view, eMAKS locks can't be picked and the keys cannot be duplicated.

SitexOrbis estimates that for every £1 spent on eMAKS, customers would save about £16 on what would have been travel costs, but also increased their productivity and income. One customer in the housing sector measured a £184,000 savings and £12,000 increase in rental income, from an investment of £12,000 over four years, SitexOrbis said.

The accuracy element of eMAKS, because it captures arrival and departure times, means the system monitors how long they work, and timesheets are not embellished.

An effect of fewer so-called 'white-van trips' is a reduction in the client's carbon footprint, says Walker. A typical client may have four Ford Transit Vans driven by tradesmen on the road. Each van is driven 100 miles a week to drop off and collect keys. Eliminating these trips would avoid emitting 54 kgs of CO₂, he estimates.

Money was also saved by getting the work done more quickly and being able to let properties faster. The system also allows us to monitor our in-house workforce and external contractors." **FM**