Mold and Mildew Awareness – Landscaping Fatality File



Fatal Respiratory Incident Linked to Mold Exposure in Landscaping

On September 10, 2023, a fatal respiratory incident occurred during a landscaping project in Vancouver, British Columbia, resulting in the death of a 45-year-old worker, Mark Johnson. Johnson had been working in a damp, shaded area under a dense tree canopy where mold and mildew had accumulated on decaying leaves and soil. Over several days, Johnson was exposed to high levels of airborne mold spores, which triggered a severe allergic reaction and respiratory distress.

Despite being rushed to the hospital after collapsing on the job site, Johnson succumbed to acute respiratory failure. The investigation revealed that the landscaping company had not provided adequate training on mold and mildew awareness, nor had it implemented proper protective measures, such as respiratory protection or environmental assessments to identify potential mold hazards.

In response to this incident, the company has introduced a mold and mildew awareness program that includes regular environmental assessments, mandatory use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves in high-risk areas, and training sessions for all employees on recognizing and mitigating the risks associated with mold exposure.