



# Monthly Newsletter

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## **Cal Poly is building more on-campus housing and starting a year-round schedule to accommodate higher enrollment.**

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo continues increasing its enrollment despite recent state and national trends that have seen a decline since 2010. As a result of this higher enrollment locally, Cal Poly is implementing year round operations and is also building more on-campus housing. The on-campus housing is still a few years off, but Cal Poly is already beginning efforts to implement year round operations by offering three semesters each year.

Beginning in Fall 2024, new students can opt to start at Cal Poly in the summer of their first year and spend a second summer on campus later in their career, while agreeing to spend two typical academic terms off-campus. The first phase of the initiative will apply to students majoring in the College of Liberal Arts, College of Engineering, and Orfalea College of Business. According to President Jeffrey D. Armstrong, “As we gain experience with year round operation, we will expand the number of majors and the number of students involved using this model, so that actual headcount on campus in any given term will be significantly lower than the university’s overall enrollment for the year.”

At California West, one of the biggest challenges that our San Luis Obispo office faces every year is the outsized impact that Cal Poly’s academic calendar has on our operations. As a result of the academic calendar, we generally have to squeeze one year of turnover work into 2-3 months during the summer, which is quite a logistical challenge. We have also been forced to require that tenants rent housing on 12 month leases even though they are often in town for only 9-10 months of the year.

If year round operations at Cal Poly are a success, as we hope will be the case, then we look forward to more efficiencies all around. We will probably still require 12 month leases but hopefully not on a rigid summer to summer schedule and housing will get better utilized as we will likely see more roommate switches during the year. If it becomes possible for students to find replacements for when they are not in town, then we expect to see more requests for roommate switches, temporary and permanent, which involves a fair amount of paperwork but is much less expensive than turning over a unit.

## **Mold and mildew complaints continue to require attention.**

One of the biggest property maintenance complaints is over excessive mold and mildew. The problem from a management perspective is that this is often a housekeeping issue, as much as it is a maintenance issue. However, tenants never want to be told this sort of news and so we are forced to argue with them or find work-arounds.

One common situation where this occurs is with interior bathrooms when the only source of ventilation is a ceiling fan. Of course, the fan has to be turned on to work and if it is not turned on then there is no ventilation and the result is obvious. What we sometimes recommend in situations like this is to install a fan that is controlled by a humidistat, rather than by a switch. The humidistat measures moisture in the air and automatically turns on rather than rely on tenants to turn on the fan when they use a shower. Of course, it would be nice if tenants could turn on fans to avoid the expense of installing a humidistat controlled fan, but sometimes this is the only viable solution.

Another source of mold and mildew is excessive and unauthorized occupancy. We recently had a situation where a tenant moved multiple families into a home without our permission and each bedroom had a family. The families kept the doors and windows shut, which trapped moisture in the rooms and resulted in excessive condensation on the walls. It was so bad that we thought there was a possible roof leak, but upon further investigation it was merely a ventilation issue. Long term, we are installing ceiling fans, vents in the doors, and of course required that everyone move out. Fortunately, these tenants were relatively cooperative in moving out, but it was still a problem and the excessive occupancy was a contributing factor, not the only factor, in causing the condensation.

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Another situation where we had issues, which was not a tenant caused problem, was with an older home with lathe and plaster walls that lacked modern insulation. The lack of insulation was causing condensation on the interior walls and the solution was to drill holes in the lathe and plaster and shoot foam insulation into the walls. This was amazingly successful.

Fans that vent air to the outside are another useful addition when there is lack of ventilation. We had condensation issues in the closets of another older home and found that installing fans inside the closets with humidistats was a solution to the problem.

The bottom line is that mold and mildew will always grow if there is a water leak or lack of ventilation. Every case seems to be different and requires some creativity to diagnose. Often, but not always, the lack of ventilation is because a tenant is causing the problem. Regardless, coming up with creative solutions to mitigate the problem is always our priority.