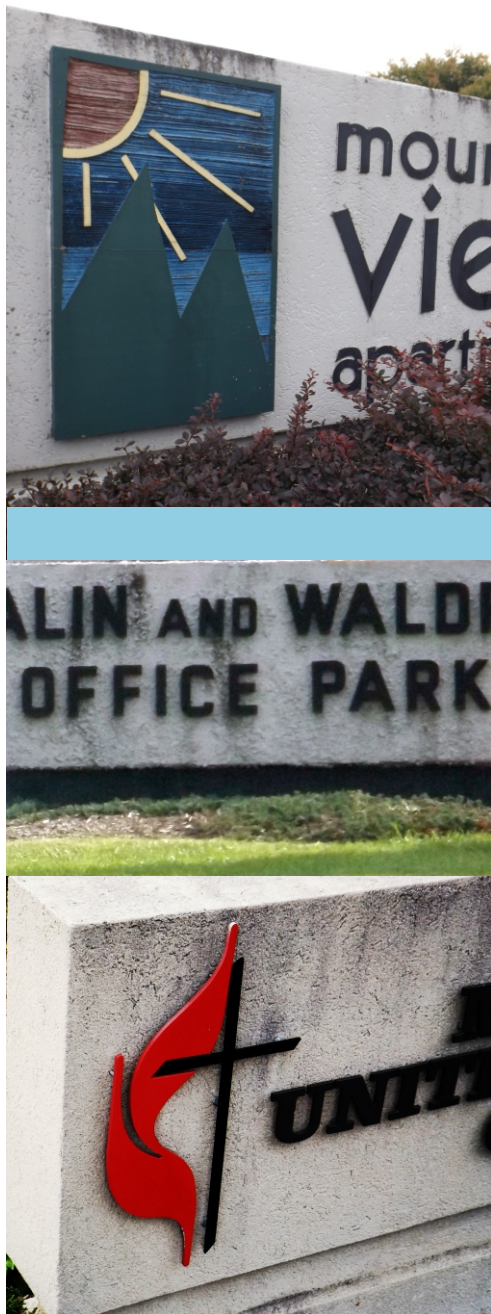




## How Mold Kills an Identity Does Virginia Have the Right Climate for Stucco Signs?



### IDENTITY THEFT

You work hard on designing and erecting a stucco monument sign to let the world know you exist on the street and then years down the road, mold and mildew show their ugly heads and blemish your corporate identity. If you or a neighboring business has had battles with moldy stucco signs, it seems like there's nothing you can do to prevent the annoying discoloration that takes away from your once beautiful branding signage.

I regularly drive across Virginia and see examples of mold damage on many trips, usually on stucco finishes. In addition to stucco monument signs, the unsightly dark green, gray or black areas of discoloration sometimes show up on walls behind dimensional wall graphics and illuminated channel letters mounted on buildings as well, making unsightly images for the businesses.

### THE PROBLEM WITH STUCCO SIGNS IN VIRGINIA

Stucco is one of the most common sign substrates falling victim to mold's identity-killing power here in Virginia because of our humid climate. Stucco finishes are mildly porous and inherently provide lots of nooks and crannies for mold and mildew to grow. There are many varieties of molds that can attack stucco if not maintained and moisture remains present on the surface for an extended time, and all of Virginia is susceptible to it. The more porous or textured the substrate, the more potential for moisture-retention that allows molds and mildew to form and cause identity problems.

### BETTER MOLD-FREE SIGNAGE OPTIONS

Most modern "stucco" components of exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) last a long time, and "stucco" finishes generally won't reach the point of having noticeable mold and mildew issues for many years after installation. Stucco sign bases and backgrounds can be eye-catching components of environmental sign designs, and if mold should crop up at some point in time, it can be cleaned and treated by mixing 5 parts water and 1 part environmentally-friendly oxygen liquid bleach, putting on rubber gloves, spraying, scrubbing and rinsing the solution over the moldy areas until clean.

That being said, aluminum signs make better long-term options for mold-resistant sign surfaces in Virginia and the Southeast USA. Metal is impervious to moisture, and Holiday Signs uses high-quality polyurethane coatings, the same as your automobile finish, to top-coat the metal panels.

**WHAT IS MOLD?** (Adapted from *Mold Basics* by Kathleen Parrott, Ph.D., Virginia Cooperative Extension)

Mold is a fungus. A fungus is an organism that lives by decomposing and absorbing the organic matter on which it grows. There are thousands of varieties of molds.

The term mildew is sometimes used interchangeably with mold, but the word "mildew" is frequently used to describe mold

**"Painted Aluminum  
is a substrate of choice  
for signage  
in climates like Virginia."**

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### Some Examples of Custom Painted Aluminum Signage by Holiday Signs:



Examples of painted aluminum monument signs...  
signage with flush, solid surfaces that deter mold growth.

**“Painted Aluminum  
resists mold growth  
on exterior signage  
in humid areas like VA, NC, MD.”**



Close-up pictures of mold on stucco  
and painted CMU surfaces.

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