



Formaldehyde in Furniture Products

Why am I being warned about potential to formaldehyde in furniture products?



- Formaldehyde (gas) is on the [Proposition 65](#) list because it can cause cancer.
- Exposure to formaldehyde can cause leukemia and cancers of the nose, throat, and sinuses.
- Proposition 65 requires businesses to determine if they must provide a warning about significant exposure to [listed chemicals](#).

What is formaldehyde?

- Formaldehyde is a colorless and flammable gas with a strong smell. It is released into the air from some [furniture products](#).
 - ▶ Formaldehyde is used to make resins such as urea-formaldehyde. These resins are used in adhesives for some [composite wood products](#) (particleboard, fiberboard, and plywood) used to manufacture furniture.
 - ▶ Formaldehyde is found in some paints, lacquers, and coatings used to manufacture wood furniture.

How does exposure to formaldehyde (gas) from furniture products occur?

- Exposure occurs by breathing air that contains formaldehyde.
 - ▶ Formaldehyde is released into the air from furniture products made with formaldehyde-containing resins, paints, lacquers, and other coatings.



How can I reduce my exposure to formaldehyde (gas) from furniture products?

[Remove or reduce existing sources of formaldehyde](#), and avoid adding new sources.

- ✓ Choose:
 - ▶ Formaldehyde-free furniture, such as furniture made with solid wood and stainless steel.
 - ▶ Furniture with lower formaldehyde gas-emission labels. These labels can include:
 - “Exterior grade” pressed wood.
 - California Air Resources Board (CARB) Phase 2 Compliant.
 - Ultra-low-emitting formaldehyde (ULEF).
 - No-added formaldehyde (NAF).
- ✗ Avoid furniture made with urea-formaldehyde resins that does not carry a California Air Resources Board (CARB) Phase 2 Compliant label.
- ✓ Air out new furniture made from composite wood products containing formaldehyde, preferably away from the home and in a well-ventilated area. The area must have fresh air passing through it, or the formaldehyde will not be removed.
 - ▶ Consider asking the manufacturer or store to leave the furniture unsealed in the warehouse for a few days before delivery.
- ✓ If furniture made from composite wood containing formaldehyde is the only available option, consider looking for *used* items, because the release of formaldehyde gas from composite wood decreases over time.
- ✓ Apply a surface barrier (for example, a latex-based paint or formaldehyde-free varnish) onto formaldehyde-containing furniture.
- ✓ Assure adequate ventilation, and open windows and doors regularly to bring in outdoor air.
- ✓ Maintain low humidity and temperatures indoors. More formaldehyde is released when it is hot and damp.

For more information:**General Fact Sheets and Resources**

- US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)
 - ▶ Facts about Formaldehyde
<http://www.epa.gov/formaldehyde/facts-about-formaldehyde#whatisformaldehyde>

- US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
National Institutes of Health (NIH)
 - ▶ Formaldehyde and Cancer Risk
<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/substances/formaldehyde/formaldehyde-fact-sheet>
- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Final Report on the Identification of Formaldehyde as a Toxic Air Contaminant
http://oehha.ca.gov/air/toxic_contaminants/html/Formaldehyde.htm

Formaldehyde in Products

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
California Air Resources Board (CARB)
 - ▶ Formaldehyde
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/formaldehyde.htm>
 - ▶ Formaldehyde in the Home
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/indoor/formaldgl08-04.pdf>
 - ▶ Composite Wood Products
http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/compwood/consumer_faq.pdf
 - ▶ Flooring Made with Composite Wood Products
http://www.arb.ca.gov/html/fact_sheets/composite_wood_flooring_faq.pdf?utm_content=bufferdbfbf&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Proposition 65

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Proposition 65: Background
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/faq>
 - ▶ Proposition 65: The List of Chemicals
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals>
 - ▶ Proposition 65: Fact Sheets
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets>