



Formaldehyde in Furniture Products

Why am I being warned about potential exposure 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 exposures 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 in making resins such as urea-formaldehyde that are used in adhesives for some [composite wood products](#) (particle board, 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 solid wood and stainless steel.
 - ▶ Furniture with lower formaldehyde gas-emission labels. These can include:
 - “Exterior grade” pressed wood.
 - California Air Resources Board (CARB) Phase 2 criteria.
 - 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 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 release of formaldehyde gas from composite wood decreases over time.
- ✓ Apply a surface barrier (for example, latex-based paints or formaldehyde-free varnishes) onto formaldehyde-containing furniture.
- ✓ Assure adequate ventilation and open windows and doors regularly to bring in outdoor air.
- ✓ Maintain low humidity and temperatures. More formaldehyde is released when it is hot and damp.

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

- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - ▶ Facts about Formaldehyde:
<http://www.epa.gov/formaldehyde/facts-about-formaldehyde#whatisformaldehyde>
- National Cancer Institute (NCI)
 - ▶ Formaldehyde and Cancer Risk:
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/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)
Air Resources Board (ARB)
 - ▶ Reducing your Exposure to 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 Chemical List:
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals>