



Gavin Newsom, Governor
Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection
Lauren Zeise, Ph.D., Director

June 12, 2024

**RE: Proposition 65 – Information Letter
Wood Dust Exposure to Consumers of Finished Furniture**

Dear Interested Parties,

This letter communicates that the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) is not aware of any circumstance where a retail consumer would be exposed to a significant risk of cancer from wood dust simply by purchasing or using assembled wood furniture.

Wood dust was added to the Proposition 65 list in 2009 because it can cause cancer. Businesses are required to provide a "clear and reasonable" warning before knowingly and intentionally exposing people in California to a listed carcinogen, unless the business can show that the anticipated exposure level will not pose a significant risk of cancer.

OEHHA has not set a "no significant risk level" for wood dust. However, that does not mean that a Proposition 65 warning to consumers is required for every furniture product containing wood or particle board, even if there may be a small amount of wood dust remaining on the product after manufacturing.¹

When there is "no significant risk [of cancer] assuming lifetime exposure at the level in question," no Proposition 65 warning is required. (Health & Safety Code § 25249.10(c).) Because "lifetime exposure" takes into account the "reasonably anticipated rate of exposure for an individual," in the case of consumers, the lifetime exposure would mean the amount of wood dust they would reasonably be expected to encounter when using a specific piece of furniture. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 27, section 25721(b).)

OEHHA is not presently aware of any circumstance in which a retail consumer would be exposed to a significant risk of cancer from wood dust simply by using assembled wood furniture. Wood dust is generated when machines or tools are used to cut or shape timber and other wood materials. Activities like chipping, sawing, drilling, sanding, or woodturning create wood dust, which can be inhaled when released into the air. Wood

¹ This letter addresses whether a business may be required to provide consumer product exposure warnings for assembled wood furniture. This does not address whether significant exposures to wood dust may occur in an occupational setting. Employees' exposures would be subject to a different analysis.

dust also settles onto tables, floors, and other surfaces. When disturbed, it can become airborne again and can be inhaled.

If the purchaser of the furniture does not have to engage in any of the above activities before using the furniture, then wood dust will not be produced. OEHHA has no reason to believe that the mere degrading of the furniture over time, without any cutting or abrasion, would generate wood dust posing a significant risk of cancer to people using those items. Likewise, any residual wood dust that may remain on the finished product for purchase would not pose a significant cancer risk and would not require a Proposition 65 warning.

Absent a significant exposure, a Proposition 65 warning for wood dust would be neither required nor desired.

Sincerely,

Lauren Zeise
[Lauren Zeise \(Jun 14, 2024 14:15 PDT\)](#)

Lauren Zeise, Ph.D.
Director