



Formaldehyde Inspections

Formaldehyde Overview

Formaldehyde is a naturally occurring chemical compound that is also frequently used in the manufacturing of many common household materials. Over the years and continuing today, formaldehyde has been utilized in the manufacturing process of thousands of products and materials. Exposure to elevated levels of this gas should be avoided whenever possible.

Much of the formaldehyde that people are exposed to comes from its use in the production of polymers that are in products used to build and furnish our homes and offices.

In more recent years the health effects associated with elevated levels of exposure have brought to light the dangers from prolonged and repeated contact with the chemical. The major exposure risks associated with formaldehyde come from occupants inhaling contaminated air.

Formaldehyde is a colorless gas that can emit strong odors. Affordable testing procedures are available by qualified professionals and accredited laboratories to determine if elevated levels of formaldehyde are present.

Formaldehyde Testing

Formaldehyde testing in residential and commercial properties has become a common practice to safeguard the health and well-being of occupants. The testing is a small price to pay for protecting people from the invisible gas and its health effects.

Formaldehyde can be found in many products that exist in our homes and offices. The chemical is commonly used in many manufacturing processes and as an ingredient in many building supplies and furnishing.

The list of formaldehyde containing substances is extensive and can involve everything from plywood and particle board, insulation, cleaners, carpeting and furniture to automobile exhaust, smog and tobacco smoke.

Exposure to elevated levels of formaldehyde can trigger asthma attacks, nausea, watery eyes and difficulty breathing. Formaldehyde has been shown to cause cancer in animals and according to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) formaldehyde may reasonably be anticipated to be a carcinogen.



Hiring a Formaldehyde Inspector

A qualified formaldehyde inspector should be able to provide references and qualifications to the building owner or occupants.

- During a formaldehyde inspection air samples are taken to determine the presence and concentrations of the gas in the air.
- If elevated levels of formaldehyde are discovered a written evaluation describing the locations, levels and recommendations for corrective actions may be given. Suggestions to decrease humidity levels and temperatures may be a component of the recommendations.

Depending on what the investigator discovers they may recommend the building owner provide additional ventilation or remove certain formaldehyde emitting substances that pose a threat to occupant health.

It is important when hiring a professional to conduct the inspection that only experienced and qualified professionals perform this important task. Be sure to also verify that any samples that are taken are to be analyzed by an accredited independent laboratory such as EMSL Analytical, Inc.

Resources

American Indoor Air Quality Council

www.iaqcouncil.org

California Indoor Air Quality Program

www.cal-iaq.org

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

www.cdc.gov/mold/

EMSL Analytical, Inc.

www.emsl.com

Indoor Air Quality Association

www.iaqa.org

LA Testing

www.LATesting.com

National Safety Council

www.nsc.org/ehc/indoor/formald.htm

U.S. Department of Labor

www.osha.gov/SLTC/formaldehyde/

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/

