



FEMA

Important Formaldehyde Information for FEMA Housing Occupants

Why are you receiving this information?

FEMA is providing this information to help you and your family better understand what formaldehyde is and how it could affect living and health conditions in your FEMA-provided housing unit. We are also providing you with a phone number where you can receive additional information about formaldehyde and discuss your disaster housing situation with a FEMA specialist.

What is formaldehyde?

Formaldehyde is a common indoor air pollutant that can be found in nearly all homes and buildings. It is a colorless gas that is released into the home from a variety of indoor sources. Formaldehyde can also be found in a variety of materials used in home construction and products for everyday living.

How might formaldehyde affect me and my family?

There are several formaldehyde-related symptoms, such as watery eyes, runny nose, burning sensation in the eyes, nose, and throat, headaches and fatigue. These symptoms are similar to those associated with the common cold, the flu or other pollutants.

Formaldehyde can affect people differently. Some people may not have any noticeable reaction to formaldehyde; others are very sensitive to it. People with eye, skin, respiratory, or allergic conditions, and those with asthma are more likely to feel the effects of formaldehyde. Children and the elderly may be more sensitive as well.

The most common route of exposure is by breathing it, which may cause nose and eye irritation even in low levels. More serious health problems may be caused by extended exposure, including a small but increased risk of some forms of cancer.

If these symptoms lessen when you are away from your home but reappear when you return, your symptoms could be from indoor pollutants that may include formaldehyde or other indoor pollutants, such as dust, mold or smoke.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, or suspect you are sensitive to formaldehyde, you should seek medical attention to see if formaldehyde may be causing your symptoms.

Additional Information

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding formaldehyde in your FEMA provided housing unit, please call:

1-866-562-2381 (TTY 1-800-462-7585)

FEMA operators will immediately direct your call to specialists who will assist you with questions about:

- Formaldehyde and health related issues
- Other available FEMA housing assistance options; and
- Recently purchased FEMA housing units