
29 C.F.R. § 1910.1048

Formaldehyde.

(a) *Scope and application.* This standard applies to all occupational exposures to formaldehyde, i.e. from formaldehyde gas, its solutions, and materials that release formaldehyde.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this standard, the following definitions shall apply:

Action level means a concentration of 0.5 part formaldehyde per million parts of air (0.5 ppm) calculated as an eight (8)-hour time-weighted average (TWA) concentration.

Assistant Secretary means the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, or designee.

Authorized person means any person required by work duties to be present in regulated areas, or authorized to do so by the employer, by this section, or by the OSH Act of 1970.

Director means the Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or designee.

Emergency is any occurrence, such as but not limited to equipment failure, rupture of containers, or failure of control equipment that results in an uncontrolled release of a significant amount of formaldehyde.

Employee exposure means the exposure to airborne formaldehyde which would occur without corrections for protection provided by any respirator that is in use.

Formaldehyde means the chemical substance, HCHO, Chemical Abstracts Service Registry No. 50-00-0.

(c) *Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL)* — (1) *TWA*: The employer shall assure that no employee is exposed to an airborne concentration of formaldehyde which exceeds 0.75 parts formaldehyde per million parts of air (0.75 ppm) as an 8-hour TWA.

(2) *Short Term Exposure Limit (STEL)*: The employer shall assure that no employee is exposed to an airborne concentration of formaldehyde which exceeds two parts formaldehyde per million parts of air (2 ppm) as a 15-minute STEL.

(d) *Exposure monitoring* — (1) *General*. (i) Each employer who has a workplace covered by this standard shall monitor employees to determine their exposure to formaldehyde.

(ii) *Exception*. Where the employer documents, using objective data, that the presence of formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing products in the workplace cannot result in airborne concentrations of formaldehyde that would cause any employee to be exposed at or above the action level or the STEL under foreseeable conditions of use, the employer will not be required to measure employee exposure to formaldehyde.

(iii) When an employee's exposure is determined from representative sampling, the measurements used shall be representative of the employee's full shift or short-term exposure to formaldehyde, as appropriate.

(iv) Representative samples for each job classification in each work area shall be taken for each shift unless the employer can document with objective data that exposure levels for a given job classification are equivalent for different work shifts.

(2) *Initial monitoring.* The employer shall identify all employees who may be exposed at or above the action level or at or above the STEL and accurately determine the exposure of each employee so identified.

(i) Unless the employer chooses to measure the exposure of each employee potentially exposed to formaldehyde, the employer shall develop a representative sampling strategy and measure sufficient exposures within each job classification for each workshift to correctly characterize and not underestimate the exposure of any employee within each exposure group.

(ii) The initial monitoring process shall be repeated each time there is a change in production, equipment, process, personnel, or control measures which may result in new or additional exposure to formaldehyde.

(iii) If the employer receives reports of signs or symptoms of respiratory or dermal conditions associated with formaldehyde exposure, the employer shall promptly monitor the affected employee's exposure.

(3) *Periodic monitoring.* (i) The employer shall periodically measure and accurately determine exposure to formaldehyde for employees shown by the initial monitoring to be exposed at or above the action level or at or above the STEL.

(ii) If the last monitoring results reveal employee exposure at or above the action level, the employer shall repeat monitoring of the employees at least every 6 months.

(iii) If the last monitoring results reveal employee exposure at or above the STEL, the employer shall repeat monitoring of the employees at least once a year under worst conditions.

(4) *Termination of monitoring.* The employer may discontinue periodic monitoring for employees if results from two consecutive sampling periods taken at least 7 days apart show that employee exposure is below the action level and the STEL. The results must be statistically representative and consistent with the employer's knowledge of the job and work operation.

(5) *Accuracy of monitoring.* Monitoring shall be accurate, at the 95 percent confidence level, to within plus or minus 25 percent for airborne concentrations of formaldehyde at the TWA and the STEL and to within plus or minus 35 percent for airborne concentrations of formaldehyde at the action level.

(6) *Employee notification of monitoring results.* The employer must, within 15 working days after the receipt of the results of any monitoring performed under this section, notify each affected employee of these results either individually in writing or by posting the results in an appropriate location that is accessible to employees. If employee exposure is above the PEL, affected employees shall be provided with a description of the corrective actions being taken by the employer to decrease exposure.

(7) *Observation of monitoring.* (i) The employer shall provide affected employees or their designated representatives an opportunity to observe any monitoring of employee exposure to formaldehyde required by this standard.

(ii) When observation of the monitoring of employee exposure to formaldehyde requires entry into an area where the use of protective clothing or equipment is required, the employer shall provide the clothing and equipment to

the observer, require the observer to use such clothing and equipment, and assure that the observer complies with all other applicable safety and health procedures.

- (e) *Regulated areas*—(1) *Signs*. (i) The employer shall establish regulated areas where the concentration of airborne formaldehyde exceeds either the TWA or the STEL and post all entrances and access ways with signs bearing the following legend:

DANGER

FORMALDEHYDE

MAY CAUSE CANCER

CAUSES SKIN, EYE, AND RESPIRATORY IRRITATION

AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

- (ii) Prior to June 1, 2016, employers may use the following legend in lieu of that specified in paragraph (e)(1)(i) of this section:

DANGER

FORMALDEHYDE

IRRITANT AND POTENTIAL CANCER HAZARD

AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

- (2) The employer shall limit access to regulated areas to authorized persons who have been trained to recognize the hazards of formaldehyde.

- (3) An employer at a multiemployer worksite who establishes a regulated area shall communicate the access restrictions and locations of these areas to other employers with work operations at that worksite.

- (f) *Methods of compliance*—(1) *Engineering controls and work practices*. The employer shall institute engineering and work practice controls to reduce and maintain employee exposures to formaldehyde at or below the TWA and the STEL.

- (2) *Exception*. Whenever the employer has established that feasible engineering and work practice controls cannot reduce employee exposure to or below either of the PELs, the employer shall apply these controls to reduce employee exposures to the extent feasible and shall supplement them with respirators which satisfy this standard.

- (g) *Respiratory protection*—(1) *General*. For employees who use respirators required by this section, the employer must provide each employee an appropriate respirator that complies with the requirements of this paragraph. Respirators must be used during:

- (i) Periods necessary to install or implement feasible engineering and work-practice controls.

- (ii) Work operations, such as maintenance and repair activities or vessel cleaning, for which the employer establishes that engineering and work-practice controls are not feasible.

- (iii) Work operations for which feasible engineering and work-practice controls are not yet sufficient to reduce

employee exposure to or below the PELs.

(iv) Emergencies.

(2) *Respirator program.* (i) The employer must implement a respiratory protection program in accordance with § 1910.134(b) through (d) (except (d)(1)(iii), (d)(3)(iii)(b)(1), and (2)), and (f) through (m), which covers each employee required by this section to use a respirator.

(ii) When employees use air-purifying respirators with chemical cartridges or canisters that do not contain end-of-service-life indicators approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, employers must replace these cartridges or canisters as specified by paragraphs (d)(3)(iii)(B)(1) and (B)(2) of 29 CFR 1910.134, or at the end of the workshift, whichever condition occurs first.

(3) *Respirator selection.* (i) Employers must:

(A) Select, and provide to employees, the appropriate respirators specified in paragraph (d)(3)(i)(A) of 29 CFR 1910.134.

(B) Equip each air-purifying, full facepiece respirator with a canister or cartridge approved for protection against formaldehyde.

(C) For escape, provide employees with one of the following respirator options: A self-contained breathing apparatus operated in the demand or pressure-demand mode; or a full facepiece respirator having a chin-style, or a front- or back-mounted industrial-size, canister or cartridge approved for protection against formaldehyde.

(ii) Employers may substitute an air-purifying, half mask respirator for an air-purifying, full facepiece respirator when they equip the half mask respirator with a cartridge approved for protection against formaldehyde and provide the affected employee with effective gas-proof goggles.

(iii) Employers must provide employees who have difficulty using negative pressure respirators with powered air-purifying respirators permitted for use under paragraph (g)(3)(i)(A) of this standard and that affords adequate protection against formaldehyde exposures.

(h) *Protective equipment and clothing.* Employers shall comply with the provisions of 29 CFR 1910.132 and 29 CFR 1910.133. When protective equipment or clothing is provided under these provisions, the employer shall provide these protective devices at no cost to the employee and assure that the employee wears them.

(1) *Selection.* The employer shall select protective clothing and equipment based upon the form of formaldehyde to be encountered, the conditions of use, and the hazard to be prevented.

(i) All contact of the eyes and skin with liquids containing 1 percent or more formaldehyde shall be prevented by the use of chemical protective clothing made of material impervious to formaldehyde and the use of other personal protective equipment, such as goggles and face shields, as appropriate to the operation.

(ii) Contact with irritating or sensitizing materials shall be prevented to the extent necessary to eliminate the hazard.

(iii) Where a face shield is worn, chemical safety goggles are also required if there is a danger of formaldehyde reaching the area of the eye.

(iv) Full body protection shall be worn for entry into areas where concentrations exceed 100 ppm and for emergency reentry into areas of unknown concentration.

(2) *Maintenance of protective equipment and clothing.* (i) The employer shall assure that protective equipment and clothing that has become contaminated with formaldehyde is cleaned or laundered before its reuse.

(ii) When formaldehyde-contaminated clothing and equipment is ventilated, the employer shall establish storage areas so that employee exposure is minimized.

(A) *Signs.* Storage areas for contaminated clothing and equipment shall have signs bearing the following legend:

DANGER

FORMALDEHYDE-CONTAMINATED [CLOTHING] EQUIPMENT

MAY CAUSE CANCER

CAUSES SKIN, EYE AND RESPIRATORY IRRITATION

DO NOT BREATHE VAPOR

DO NOT GET ON SKIN

(B) *Labels.* The employer shall ensure containers for contaminated clothing and equipment are labeled consistent with the Hazard Communication Standard, § 1910.1200, and shall, as a minimum, include the following:

DANGER

FORMALDEHYDE-CONTAMINATED [CLOTHING] EQUIPMENT

MAY CAUSE CANCER

CAUSES SKIN, EYE, AND RESPIRATORY IRRITATION

DO NOT BREATHE VAPOR

DO NOT GET ON SKIN

(C) Prior to June 1, 2016, employers may use the following legend in lieu of that specified in paragraph (h)(2)(ii)(A) of this section:

DANGER

FORMALDEHYDE-CONTAMINATED [CLOTHING] EQUIPMENT

AVOID INHALATION AND SKIN CONTACT

(D) Prior to June 1, 2015, employers may include the following information on containers of protective clothing and equipment in lieu of the labeling requirements in paragraphs (h)(2)(ii)(B) of this section:

DANGER

FORMALDEHYDE-CONTAMINATED [CLOTHING] EQUIPMENT

AVOID INHALATION AND SKIN CONTACT

(iii) The employer shall assure that only persons trained to recognize the hazards of formaldehyde remove the contaminated material from the storage area for purposes of cleaning, laundering, or disposal.

- (iv) The employer shall assure that no employee takes home equipment or clothing that is contaminated with formaldehyde.
- (v) The employer shall repair or replace all required protective clothing and equipment for each affected employee as necessary to assure its effectiveness.
- (vi) The employer shall inform any person who launders, cleans, or repairs such clothing or equipment of formaldehyde's potentially harmful effects and of procedures to safely handle the clothing and equipment.
- (i) *Hygiene protection.* (1) The employer shall provide change rooms, as described in 29 CFR 1910.141 for employees who are required to change from work clothing into protective clothing to prevent skin contact with formaldehyde.
- (2) If employees' skin may become splashed with solutions containing 1 percent or greater formaldehyde, for example, because of equipment failure or improper work practices, the employer shall provide conveniently located quick drench showers and assure that affected employees use these facilities immediately.
- (3) If there is any possibility that an employee's eyes may be splashed with solutions containing 0.1 percent or greater formaldehyde, the employer shall provide acceptable eyewash facilities within the immediate work area for emergency use.
- (j) *Housekeeping.* For operations involving formaldehyde liquids or gas, the employer shall conduct a program to detect leaks and spills, including regular visual inspections.
- (1) Preventative maintenance of equipment, including surveys for leaks, shall be undertaken at regular intervals.
- (2) In work areas where spillage may occur, the employer shall make provisions to contain the spill, to decontaminate the work area, and to dispose of the waste.
- (3) The employer shall assure that all leaks are repaired and spills are cleaned promptly by employees wearing suitable protective equipment and trained in proper methods for cleanup and decontamination.
- (4) Formaldehyde-contaminated waste and debris resulting from leaks or spills shall be placed for disposal in sealed containers bearing a label warning of formaldehyde's presence and of the hazards associated with formaldehyde. The employer shall ensure that the labels are in accordance with paragraph (m) of this section.
- (k) *Emergencies.* For each workplace where there is the possibility of an emergency involving formaldehyde, the employer shall assure appropriate procedures are adopted to minimize injury and loss of life. Appropriate procedures shall be implemented in the event of an emergency.
- (l) *Medical surveillance*—(1) *Employees covered.* (i) The employer shall institute medical surveillance programs for all employees exposed to formaldehyde at concentrations at or exceeding the action level or exceeding the STEL.
- (ii) The employer shall make medical surveillance available for employees who develop signs and symptoms of overexposure to formaldehyde and for all employees exposed to formaldehyde in emergencies. When determining whether an employee may be experiencing signs and symptoms of possible overexposure to formaldehyde, the employer may rely on the evidence that signs and symptoms associated with formaldehyde exposure will occur only in exceptional circumstances when airborne exposure is less than 0.1 ppm and when formaldehyde is present in material in concentrations less than 0.1 percent.

(2) *Examination by a physician.* All medical procedures, including administration of medical disease questionnaires, shall be performed by or under the supervision of a licensed physician and shall be provided without cost to the employee, without loss of pay, and at a reasonable time and place.

(3) *Medical disease questionnaire.* The employer shall make the following medical surveillance available to employees prior to assignment to a job where formaldehyde exposure is at or above the action level or above the STEL and annually thereafter. The employer shall also make the following medical surveillance available promptly upon determining that an employee is experiencing signs and symptoms indicative of possible overexposure to formaldehyde.

(i) Administration of a medical disease questionnaire, such as in appendix D, which is designed to elicit information on work history, smoking history, any evidence of eye, nose, or throat irritation; chronic airway problems or hyperreactive airway disease: allergic skin conditions or dermatitis; and upper or lower respiratory problems.

(ii) A determination by the physician, based on evaluation of the medical disease questionnaire, of whether a medical examination is necessary for employees not required to wear respirators to reduce exposure to formaldehyde.

(4) *Medical examinations.* Medical examinations shall be given to any employee who the physician feels, based on information in the medical disease questionnaire, may be at increased risk from exposure to formaldehyde and at the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter to all employees required to wear a respirator to reduce exposure to formaldehyde. The medical examination shall include:

(i) A physical examination with emphasis on evidence of irritation or sensitization of the skin and respiratory system, shortness of breath, or irritation of the eyes.

(ii) Laboratory examinations for respirator wearers consisting of baseline and annual pulmonary function tests. As a minimum, these tests shall consist of forced vital capacity (FVC), forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV₁), and forced expiratory flow (FEF).

(iii) Any other test which the examining physician deems necessary to complete the written opinion.

(iv) Counseling of employees having medical conditions that would be directly or indirectly aggravated by exposure to formaldehyde on the increased risk of impairment of their health.

(5) *Examinations for employees exposed in an emergency.* The employer shall make medical examinations available as soon as possible to all employees who have been exposed to formaldehyde in an emergency.

(i) The examination shall include a medical and work history with emphasis on any evidence of upper or lower respiratory problems, allergic conditions, skin reaction or hypersensitivity, and any evidence of eye, nose, or throat irritation.

(ii) Other examinations shall consist of those elements considered appropriate by the examining physician.

(6) *Information provided to the physician.* The employer shall provide the following information to the examining physician:

(i) A copy of this standard and appendix A, C, D, and E;

(ii) A description of the affected employee's job duties as they relate to the employee's exposure to formaldehyde;

- (iii) The representative exposure level for the employee's job assignment;
- (iv) Information concerning any personal protective equipment and respiratory protection used or to be used by the employee; and
- (v) Information from previous medical examinations of the affected employee within the control of the employer.
- (vi) In the event of a nonroutine examination because of an emergency, the employer shall provide to the physician as soon as possible: A description of how the emergency occurred and the exposure the victim may have received.
- (7) *Physician's written opinion.* (i) For each examination required under this standard, the employer shall obtain a written opinion from the examining physician. This written opinion shall contain the results of the medical examination except that it shall not reveal specific findings or diagnoses unrelated to occupational exposure to formaldehyde. The written opinion shall include:

This document is only available to subscribers. Please [log in](#) or [purchase access](#).

[Purchase Login](#)