Formaldehyde

Formaldehyde Concentration: 30 ng/L (24 ppb)

Your Formaldehyde Level (Highlighted)

- Low: 0-20 ng/L
- Average: 20-50 ng/L
- Elevated: 50-100 ng/L
- High: 100+ ng/L

Recommendation: Average formaldehyde level but improvements can be achieved by locating and removing sources. See formaldehyde sources section below.

Formaldehyde Exposure Limits

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has set a recommended exposure limit (REL) of 20 ng/L (16 parts per billion). The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has set a workplace permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 936 ng/L (750 parts per billion). For more information on exposure limits, see this report about Environmental Health.

Because of the number and range (from a few ppb to almost one ppm) of published exposure limits, the levels displayed above are based on the statistical distribution of concentrations Prism has gathered from homes rather than exposure limits.

Formaldehyde Sources

The main sources of formaldehyde are composite or engineered wood products that contain urea-formaldehyde (UF) resins (e.g., particleboard, hardwood plywood paneling, medium density fiberboard). Products that contain phenol-formaldehyde (PF) resin also emit formaldehyde but at lower concentrations (e.g., softwood plywood, flake or oriented strand board). Formaldehyde is also present in other building products such as pre-finished engineered flooring, insulation, glues and adhesives, and paints and coatings, as well as textiles, disinfectant cleaning products and soaps, preservatives, cosmetics, some air fresheners, pet care products, bactericides and fungicides. Formaldehyde is also a byproduct of many combustion processes, such as tobacco smoke and fuel-burning appliances (gas stoves, kerosene space heaters and fireplaces).

The resources listed below provide additional information about formaldehyde.

US Environmental Protection Agency
http://www.epa.gov/iaq/formaldehyde.html
http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/hlthef/formalde.html

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2855181/

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