

Product Safety Commission voted on February 22, 1982, to ban new installations of urea-formaldehyde foam insulation. This ban became effective August 10, 1982.

What do the test results mean?

The presence of formaldehyde is dependent upon several variable environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity and as environmental conditions vary, the amount of formaldehyde present in the home may also vary. The test results only tell you if formaldehyde was present in the home at the time of sampling and at what concentration.

The test results do not tell you the source of the formaldehyde. If the test is positive, the formaldehyde may be from one of several sources previously mentioned. A negative test result indicates that during the sampling period there was no formaldehyde detected at the detection limit.

If formaldehyde is detected in a home, is there a way of reducing or eliminating it?

Individuals experiencing problems or who are concerned about formaldehyde in their home should contact the manufacturer or installer and have them correct the problem. The Michigan Department of Public Health is not aware of any foolproof means of reducing or eliminating formaldehyde in the home. Several different ways of reducing formaldehyde have been reported which include:

1. Remove the urea-formaldehyde foam insulation and/or other sources of formaldehyde.
2. Apply a sealer to the interior wall, paneling, particle board, or plywood surfaces.
3. Increase the ventilation within the home.
4. Introduce tempered air into the home thereby creating a positive air pressure within the dwelling.

Listing of these attempted solutions does not imply endorsement by the Michigan Department of Public Health.

Should a physician be consulted?

When any of the previously noted symptoms are experienced, a physician should be consulted to determine the cause or to advise the patient if the symptoms may be related to formaldehyde exposure. The physician should be made aware of the patient's history of possible exposure to formaldehyde, both at work and at home. If the physician feels the symptoms are consistent with formaldehyde exposure and there is reason to suspect that formaldehyde exposure exists in the home, the physician may determine that testing of the home environment is warranted. The test results should be shared with your physician.