



Structural Insulated Panel Association

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Date: June 14, 2011

To: SIPA Member Manufacturers

From: Bill Wachtler

Subject: Facts on styrene and formaldehyde

On June 10, 2011, the National Toxicology Program released its Report on Carcinogens, which included the substances styrene and formaldehyde. The report's release spurred an article in the New York Times ([click here for link](#)) about the potential health risks of these two substances. Additional media coverage over the next several days is anticipated.

SIPA is working closely with the EPS Molders Association (EPSMA), the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and APA –The Engineered Wood Association to keep our members informed and able to respond to these claims.

Suggested customer inquiry response points for styrene:

- The Report on Carcinogens is a hazard identification document and does not present quantitative assessments of the risk of cancer associated with exposure.
- Styrene has not been listed as a carcinogen but as the lesser, "*reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen.*"
- *Reasonably anticipated* is for substances for which there is limited evidence of carcinogenicity from studies in humans, which indicates that causal interpretation is credible, but that alternative explanations, such as chance, bias, or confounding factors, could not adequately be excluded.
- The FDA has deemed styrene safe for use in food packaging.

Suggested customer inquiry response points for formaldehyde:

- The OSB used in SIPs is made with phenol formaldehyde adhesives, not the urea formaldehyde adhesives frequently associated with formaldehyde offgassing. Urea formaldehyde adhesives are used in the production of hardwood plywood and particle board not designed for exterior exposure.



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- The California Air Resources Board (CARB) Air Toxic Control Measure for Composite Wood Products specifically exempts OSB because of its nearly nonexistent formaldehyde emissions.
- Tests conducted by APA show that the amount of formaldehyde offgassed by new structural panels is 0.1 ppm (see attached report).
 - No studies have indicated such low levels of exposure could cause health risks.
 - Formaldehyde is naturally found in the environment at low levels in many fruits and vegetables, in ambient air, and as a naturally occurring element of human blood. Our bodies readily break down the low levels to which we are exposed every day.

More information on formaldehyde from APA is available [here](#).

The Report on Carcinogens can be found at: <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/go/roc12>

For additional questions contact Bill Wachtler (253-858-7472) or Chris Schwind (503-281-3368).