

Iowa DNR/Household Hazardous Materials

Material: Formaldehyde is a colorless gas. Formalin is a liquid compound of formaldehyde.

Potential Hazards: The most common way to be exposed to formaldehyde is by breathing air containing formaldehyde. Breathing air containing low levels of formaldehyde can cause burning and watering eyes. As levels increase, it can cause burning of the nose and throat, coughing, and difficulty in breathing. Liquid formalin can be found in household products such as tropical fish treatments or in the health care industry. Liquid formalin can be absorbed through the skin, causing irritation, rash, dizziness or loss of consciousness.

Products such as plywood, particle board and other pressed wood products could contain formaldehyde compounds that can release formaldehyde gas into the air. These types of releases are known as "off gassing". They occur most often indoors when the product is new and decrease over time.

A simple and effective way to reduce formaldehyde levels in the home is to increase air flow in the affected area by opening windows and doors.

Recycle/Reuse: N/A

Proper Disposal: For products containing formaldehyde, contact your local solid waste agency. Liquid formalin or formaldehyde may be taken to your local Regional Collection Center, find yours at iowadnr.gov/hhm under the RCC tab.