



INNOVATIONS FOR LIVING™

JUST THE FACTS—FORMALDEHYDE AND INSULATION

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT FORMALDEHYDE AND INSULATION

As you may have heard, a fiber glass insulation producer is now manufacturing and selling a product that they promote as being “formaldehyde-free.” Many customers have asked us about formaldehyde in fiber glass insulation and what we think about our competitor’s product.

We are concerned that the way this producer is promoting its product as “formaldehyde-free” may be creating confusion and unnecessary concern among our customers regarding formaldehyde in traditional fiber glass insulation. As the leading producer of fiber glass insulation, we want to address that confusion and possible concern, and set the record straight regarding formaldehyde and fiber glass insulation.

FIRST OF ALL, WHAT’S THE ROLE OF FORMALDEHYDE IN INSULATION?

From the time fiber glass insulation was invented, manufacturers have used formaldehyde as a binder ingredient in the manufacturing process to help glue or “bind” the glass fibers together. The binder gives the insulation its shape and the ability to recover from a highly compressed package.

WHAT IS “FORMALDEHYDE-FREE” INSULATION?

“Formaldehyde-free,” as its manufacturer uses that term, is fiber glass insulation produced using a binder containing no formaldehyde. However, like all glass fiber insulation, “formaldehyde-free” fiber glass insulation contains trace amounts of formaldehyde—though less than traditional fiber glass insulation. The trace amounts of formaldehyde found in both traditional and “formaldehyde-free” insulation do not present health concerns. In fact, the producer of “formaldehyde-free” fiber glass insulation has stated, “there is no evidence to suggest that the level of formaldehyde released by traditionally bonded insulation is at all harmful. . . .” Trace levels of formaldehyde are all around us—in paper towels, fabric softeners, cosmetics and paper money. Even apples, potatoes and fish contain trace amounts of formaldehyde.

DOES FORMALDEHYDE IN TRADITIONAL INSULATION PRESENT HEALTH ISSUES?

No. The trace amounts of formaldehyde in traditional fiber glass insulation do not present health or indoor air quality issues. And you don’t have to take our word for it.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) do not even list fiber glass insulation as a major source of formaldehyde in the home. CPSC tests confirm that the trace amounts of formaldehyde in fiber glass insulation are not a concern to human health or the environment. The North American



Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA) is in absolute agreement with the EPA and CPSC:

"Consistent with the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, we do not consider the trace amounts of formaldehyde found in fiber glass insulation to be a concern to human health or the environment." (NAIMA, 3-22-02)

The makers of "formaldehyde-free" insulation do not dispute the findings of the EPA, CPSC and NAIMA. They state:

"Existing research on fiber glass insulation with phenol-formaldehyde binders suggests that the levels of formaldehyde that could potentially be released from a finished ordinary product are so low as to present virtually no risk."

They further state:

"In making the switch to the formaldehyde-free binder, [we] are not correcting any health problem with the product."

SO WHAT'S THE HEALTH PROBLEM CORRECTED BY "FORMALDEHYDE-FREE" FIBER GLASS INSULATION?

The makers of "formaldehyde-free" fiber glass insulation openly state that "there is no evidence to suggest that the level of formaldehyde released by traditionally bonded insulation is at all harmful. ..." And they're right. There is simply no health problem presented by the trace amounts of formaldehyde in traditional fiber glass insulation.

THEN WHAT'S THE POINT OF "FORMALDEHYDE-FREE" INSULATION?

"Formaldehyde-free" insulation offers no health or performance advantage over the tried-and-true method of manufacturing insulation.

For more than 65 years, fiber glass insulation has been manufactured with a binder that contains formaldehyde. It's been used throughout the world as a safe and effective insulation material.

Owens Corning continues to produce the best quality insulation in the world. Just ask any builder. Or look at the rankings. The *2006 Buyer's Guide, Builder magazine* Brand Use Study ranked Owens Corning first in Brand Used Most, Brand Familiarity, and Highest Quality Rating.



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