

The Policy on the Use of Formaldehyde
4/17/18 – Last Revision

INTENT

This policy reviews the OSHA standard 1910.1048 for Formaldehyde. The standard applies to all occupational exposures to formaldehyde, i.e. from formaldehyde gas, its solutions, and materials that release formaldehyde.

https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10075

POLICY

1. The University (employer) shall assure that no employee is exposed to an airborne concentration of formaldehyde which exceeds 0.75 parts formaldehyde per million parts of (0.75 ppm) as an 8-hour TWA – Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL). The University shall also assure that no employee is exposed to an airborne concentration of formaldehyde, which exceeds two parts formaldehyde per million parts of air (2 ppm), as a 15-minute Short Term Exposure Limit (STEL).
2. The University shall monitor their employees to determine their exposure to formaldehyde. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety will conduct all monitoring for formaldehyde. All Principal Investigators using formaldehyde (this includes formalin) in their research, in their teaching labs, or storing specimens in formaldehyde must notify the Office of Environmental Health and Safety in Chemistry B72, so that their employees receive the appropriate monitoring to determine their exposures. Employees include faculty, staff, lab assistants, graduate students and teaching assistants. Monitoring of the employee must be repeated, if there is a change in usage of the formaldehyde, which may result in new or additional exposure formaldehyde. Principal Investigators must inform the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, if their employees show signs or symptoms of respiratory or dermal conditions associated with formaldehyde exposure.
3. The University will notify in writing the employees of their monitoring results within 15 days of receiving the results. If monitoring results are over the PEL or STEL the University will take the necessary actions as defined in 1910.1048.
4. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety will select and provide protective clothing and equipment based upon the form of formaldehyde to be encountered, to those employees exposed to formaldehyde. All contact of the eyes and skin with liquids, containing 1 percent or more formaldehyde, shall be prevented by the usage of other chemical protective clothing made of material impervious to formaldehyde and the use of other personal protective equipment, such as goggles and face shields, as appropriate to the operation. Contact with irritating or sensitizing materials shall be prevented to the extent necessary to eliminate the hazard.
5. In areas where formaldehyde is used, quick drench showers and acceptable eyewash facilities must be immediately available. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety will provide the showers and eyewashes where necessary upon notification.
6. The Principal Investigator shall routinely conduct visual inspections to detect leaks or spills in areas where formaldehyde is used or stored.

7. The University shall make medical surveillance available for all employees who develop signs and symptoms of overexposure to formaldehyde and for all employees exposed to formaldehyde in emergencies. This will be arranged through the Office of Environmental Health and Safety in Chemistry B72.
8. All containers of formaldehyde, all mixtures or solutions composed of greater than 0.1% formaldehyde, and materials capable of releasing formaldehyde into the air, under reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, at concentrations reaching or exceeding 0.1 ppm shall be labeled with the appropriate hazard warnings. The labeling is the responsibility of the user.
9. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety will provide training on the specific health hazards of formaldehyde, on the contents of this policy and the OSHA standard to all employees exposed to formaldehyde at or above 0.1 ppm.
10. All areas where formaldehyde is being used should be posted as a "Designated Area" as defined in Appendix I of the University's Chemical Hygiene Plan. If a Designated Area sign is required, please contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.
11. In order to eliminate exposure of employees to formaldehyde and its solutions, it should be used in a fume hood whenever possible.

If you have any questions, regarding this policy, please contact the
Office of Environmental Health and Safety in Chemistry B72.