



# Formaldehyde

The information contained on this document was obtained from a variety of sources including the EPA, State of New Jersey, ATSDR and Maine industries. The release data is from required reporting to THWRP, the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and to EPA Toxics Release Inventory (TRI).

## What is it?

At room temperature, formaldehyde is a colorless, flammable gas that has a distinct, pungent smell. It is naturally produced in small amounts in our bodies and exists naturally in wood.

## What is it used for?

Formaldehyde is used in the production of paper, fertilizer, chemical and resin manufacturing, and textile finishing. It is also used in many products used around the house, such as antiseptics, medicines, and cosmetics.

## Sources in Maine?

Paper Mills, Oriented Strand Board Manufacturers and Plastic Manufacturers.

## Where is it released?

It is released to air from wood chip drying in preparation for pressing, from formaldehyde process and storage tanks, from resin production, from wood pulping, pulp bleaching and combustion of oil and chemical recovery operations. It is released to water through the wastewater treatment operations.

## Human Health Effects?

Formaldehyde is a CARCINOGEN. Low exposures can irritate the nose, throat, and mouth. High levels may cause a buildup of fluids in the lungs. It also may cause skin and asthma allergies.

## Environmental Effects?

Formaldehyde is easily dissolved in water. In air it breaks down quickly into formic acid and carbon monoxide. It does not accumulate in plants or animals.

## 2001 Releases In Maine

# 216,628 lbs

For more information please go to these websites: