



INNOVATIONS FOR LIVING™

## JUST THE FACTS—FORMALDEHYDE AND INSULATION

### YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT FORMALDEHYDE AND INSULATION

As you may have heard, some fiber glass insulation producers are now manufacturing and selling a product promoted 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 of promoting 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 manufacturers use the term, is fiber glass insulation produced using a binder containing no formaldehyde. However, like all glass fiber insulation, “formaldehyde-free” fiber glass insulation we manufacture can contain trace amounts of formaldehyde—though less than traditional fiber glass insulation. The trace amounts of formaldehyde found in certain traditional or “formaldehyde-free” insulations do not present health concerns. In fact, a 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. One states:

*"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."*

And further states:

*"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 60 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.



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