

**Important
Information for
Travel Trailer
Occupants**



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FEMA-Waxman - 377

If you notice an odor in your trailer—it could be formaldehyde.

What is formaldehyde?

Formaldehyde is a common indoor air pollutant that can be found in nearly all homes and buildings. It is a colorless gas that is released into the home from a variety of indoor sources. Formaldehyde can be found in a variety of every day products in your home, such as:

Household Products: cleaning solutions, dishwashing liquids, fabric softeners, shoe-care agents, carpet cleaning solutions, adhesives

Personal Care Products: nail polish, cosmetics, shampoos, antiperspirants

Fabrics: clothing, linens, draperies, couch cushions, automobile interiors

Appliances: wood stoves, gas appliances, kerosene stoves

Tobacco products: cigarettes, cigars

Building materials: particleboard, plywood, cabinets, and wall and floor materials, wallpaper, some other paper goods, paint coatings

As a result, travel trailers, mobile homes, manufactured homes, new homes, and recently remodeled homes are more likely to contain higher levels of formaldehyde. Over time, formaldehyde goes away and the odors and the effects decrease or disappear.

How might formaldehyde affect me?

Formaldehyde is just one of several gases present indoors that may cause discomfort. It may cause symptoms similar to that of the common cold or flu. Formaldehyde can affect people differently—some people are very sensitive to formaldehyde while others may not have any noticeable reaction to the same level. People with eye, skin, respiratory, or allergic conditions, and those with asthma are potentially more susceptible to the effects of formaldehyde. Children and the elderly may be more sensitive as well. People who suspect they are sensitive to formaldehyde should work closely with a doctor to see if formaldehyde is causing their symptoms.

What can I do to reduce my exposure to formaldehyde in my travel trailer?

- **Increase ventilation.** You can reduce your exposure to formaldehyde by bringing more outdoor air into your home. Open windows and doors whenever possible.
- **Keep indoor temperatures moderate.** As the temperature rises, the effects of formaldehyde may be more noticeable. You can use the air conditioner to keep temperatures relatively low, which will help lower the formaldehyde effects and odors.
- **Lower the humidity.** You can decrease the rate at which formaldehyde is released from pressed wood and other products by lowering the humidity in your travel trailer. Humidity should be maintained at about 40% to 50% relative humidity in the home.
- **Do not smoke inside.** Tobacco smoking produces formaldehyde and other toxic chemicals.