



WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF BC

Policy and Research Division

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UPDATE: Consultation period is extended to **October 21, 2005.**

August 10, 2005

RE: Adoption of ACGIH TLV for Formaldehyde

WorkSafeBC - Workers' Compensation Board ("WCB") is committed to reducing workers' exposure to hazardous chemicals in the workplace. This is accomplished by setting Occupational Exposure Limits ("OELs") for chemical substances that are used in British Columbia. An OEL is the maximum allowable airborne concentration of a chemical substance to which most workers can be exposed on a daily basis without experiencing adverse health effects.

Section 5.48 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* ("OHSR") provides that, except as otherwise determined by the WCB, a worker's exposure to a hazardous chemical substance must not exceed the limits established by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists ("ACGIH"). WCB policy provides a list of exceptions where it has been determined that a specific limit established by the ACGIH is not appropriate for adoption in British Columbia. The list of exceptions provides an OEL for formaldehyde that is less protective than the current ACGIH threshold limit value ("TLV").

The Board of Directors ("BOD") is committed to ensuring worker health and safety by adopting more protective exposure limits, where they exist, for harmful substances. Toward this end, the BOD is prepared to adopt the ACGIH TLV assigned to formaldehyde. Formaldehyde was reclassified as a Group 1 carcinogen in 2004 by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

	Current OEL		ACGIH TLV	
	TWA (1)	STEL (2)	TWA (1)	STEL (2)
Formaldehyde	0.3 ppm	C 1 ppm	-----	C 0.3 ppm

(1) **TWA** - the 8-hour time weighted average (TWA) limit, as defined in section [5.1](#) of the *OHSR*.

(2) **STEL** - the short-term exposure limit or STEL, which is defined in section [5.1](#) of the *OHSR*. Note that:

"C" indicates a ceiling limit, which is defined in section [5.1](#) of the *OHSR*.

Your comments are being requested regarding the adoption of the ACGIH TLV for formaldehyde. If you have no concerns regarding the TLV, you may wish to respond and advise of such. However, if you feel that you are not able to meet this standard, please indicate why and what steps you would take to mitigate exposure to this substance.

It would be appreciated if you would submit your response by September 30, 2005.

Your response may be sent by mail, fax or e-mail to:

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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Policy and Research Division at (604) 276-5160.

Yours truly,

Anne Burch
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Policy and Research Division