

De Rosa, Christopher (Chris) (ATSDR/DTEM/OD)

To: Frumkin, Howard (ATSDR/OA/OD); Sinks, Tom (ATSDR/OA/OD);
'Meiburg.Stan@epamail.epa.gov'; Deitchman, Scott (CDC/CCEHIP/NCEH); Allred, Phillip M.
(Mike) (CDC/CCEHIP/NCEH)
Cc: Fowler, Bruce (ATSDR/DTEM/OD); Murray, Ed (ATSDR/DTEM/ATB); Orloff, Ken L. (OIG);
Osterloh, John (CDC/CCEHIP/NCEH)
Subject: FW: Indoor air formaldehyde

Howie and et. al.,

We should be very cautious about the use of the word "safe" in reference to formaldehyde. Since it is a carcinogen it is a matter of science policy that there is no "safe" level of exposure. DHHS has classified formaldehyde as "reasonably anticipated" to be a human carcinogen." IARC has determined that formaldehyde is "probably carcinogenic to humans" while EPA has determined that formaldehyde is "a probable human carcinogen."

In addition to cancer formaldehyde has been shown to be a reproductive/developmental toxicant and is a skin sensitizer as is evidenced by the reported symptoms of the children in the trailers in Mississippi. These overt symptoms will probably trigger sensitization in some proportion to varying degrees in children.

Nevertheless, there are acute, intermediate and chronic inhalation MRLs in our toxicological profile as well as intermediate and chronic oral MRLs for non-cancer end points. Since these values have been peer and publically reviewed, I would suggest that they be used as a point of departure for any deliberative process.

Also, please note that it has been demonstrated that formaldehyde potentiates the effects of the triazine monomer found in melamine which is currently a dietary concern being addressed by FDA in consultation with a number of different agencies including CDC/NCEH and ATSDR.

To my knowledge this represents the third time that FEMA has approached NCEH/ATSDR requesting that we specify safe levels of exposure to formaldehyde. In two instances they specifically requested that we limit the scope of our response to short term exposures. Last fall, I was contacted by FEMA in region 4 requesting that I review and approve a modified version of our ToxFaqs sheet. More recently we were contacted through OPTER again requesting guidance for short term exposures only.

For these reasons we should be very cautious in making a public health call on this issue.

Chris

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and Disease Registry 1600 Clifton Road - Mailstop F32 Atlanta, GA 30333
(770) 488-7003

-----Original Message-----

From: Murray, Ed (ATSDR/DTEM/ATB)
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2007 4:31 PM
To: De Rosa, Christopher (Chris) (ATSDR/DTEM/OD)
Subject: FW: Indoor air formaldehyde

fyi

Ed

-----Original Message-----

From: Fowler, Bruce (ATSDR/DTEM/OD)
Sent: Friday, June 01, 2007 2:27 PM
To: Orloff, Kenneth G. (ATSDR/DHAC/OD); Murray, Ed (ATSDR/DTEM/ATB)
Subject: Re: Indoor air formaldehyde

A-4-7

H. Ken: I am sure we can help out. I am copying Ed Murray on this and will ask him to forward the name of our SME on formaldehyde to you. I will also volunteer if needed. I thought they had stopped using the foam insulation in mobile homes long ago. Wow-lowest bidder.

Best,
Bruce

Sent from my BlackBerry Wireless Device

-----Original Message-----

From: Orloff, Kenneth G. (ATSDR/DHAC/OD)
To: Fowler, Bruce (ATSDR/DTEM/OD)
CC: Cibulas, William (ATSDR/DHAC/OD); Williams-Fleetwood, Sharon O. (ATSDR/DHAC/OD)
Sent: Fri Jun 01 14:00:13 2007
Subject: Indoor air formaldehyde

Bruce,

FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security have requested assistance from NCEH in investigating reported respiratory illness in children who are living in trailers provided by FEMA for families displaced by Hurricane Katrina. As you are probably aware, Scott Wright and Joe Little have written a health consultation that assesses the impact of various ventilation methods on indoor air levels of formaldehyde in these trailers.

As part of its investigation, NCEH has asked DHAC to recommend indoor air levels of formaldehyde that would be safe for residents of FEMA trailers (there are no EPA or federal standards). To respond to this request, I will be chairing a small ad hoc work group of toxicologists and health assessors. I would appreciate DTEM's participation in this workgroup, and I am requesting 1 or 2 DTEM staff to participate in the discussions. This is a fast-track request, and I hope to get a recommendation out in 30-days.

Please indicate if DTEM can participate.

Thanks, Ken

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