

CARB's enforcement protects California consumers from toxic formaldehyde emissions

CARB holds composite wood industry accountable for ensuring everyday products are safe for California consumers' use

SACRAMENTO – Following the record fine levied on Lumber Liquidators in 2016, the California Air Resources Board has continued to monitor the safety of consumer products like flooring and cabinets that use composite wood materials. As a result of this vigilance, CARB has settled 15 cases totaling more than \$338,000 over the past two-and-a-half years with companies that failed to follow California's clean air regulations for composite wood materials in a variety of everyday household products.

Composite wood products are manufactured with glue, wood veneers, and wood byproducts to make them stronger. However, glues used in composite wood can also emit formaldehyde which is a toxic air contaminant that causes cancer. To protect public health, in 2007 CARB established strict emission standards for hardwood plywood, particleboard, and medium density fiberboard. CARB's regulation applies to all composite wood manufacturers, importers, fabricators, distributors, and retailers selling in the state, and requires that:

- composite wood materials are produced in a mill that is third party certified;
- efforts taken to ensure materials are compliant are documented; and
- all products are labeled for compliance.

“CARB's programs are designed to ensure that no child in school, and no resident of California is exposed to toxic formaldehyde from composite wood flooring, furniture, and related products,” explains Todd Sax, Enforcement Division Chief. “Businesses must proactively verify that the product is compliant and document those efforts, label their product adequately as a compliant product, and notify their customers. Anything less puts consumers at risk and businesses will be held accountable through enforcement action.”

CARB's enforcement program includes both emissions testing and extensive audits of the compliance precautions taken. After settling the Lumber Liquidators case in 2016, CARB has settled 15 additional cases involving importers, distributors, and retailers of composite wood products. Most of these cases involved excess emissions and inadequate precautions to ensure compliant material was sold, including the sale of unlabeled product.

CARB enforcement efforts are continuing, focused on flooring, cabinetry, and any other furniture using composite wood products, and at manufacturers, distributors, and both brick and mortar and internet retailers.

Composite Wood Products Settlement Cases Since 2016

Investigation Name	Settlement Date	Settlement	Type of Business	Product Type
AAA Flooring and Building Supplies	3/24/2017	\$27,750	Importer/ Distributor/Retailer	Flooring
USC Flooring Products, Inc.	5/19/2017	\$60,000	Importer/ Distributor/ Retailer	Flooring
Expo Floors	10/19/2017	\$6,000	Importer/ Retailer	Flooring
Coles Fine Flooring	8/2/2018	\$6,000	Retailer	Flooring
Rivera's Floor Covering	10/24/2018	\$18,000	Retailer	Flooring
Factory Direct Floor	10/31/2018	\$7,500	Importer/ Distributor	Flooring
Provenza Floors	12/6/2018	\$26,000	Importer/Distributor	Flooring
Linco Enterprises, Inc.	1/9/2019	\$45,000	Importer/ Distributor	Flooring
DJJ Cabinets	1/23/2019	\$7,500	Importer/ Distributor/Retailer	Cabinets
America Top Essential Inc.	1/30/2019	\$25,000	Importer/ Distributor	Flooring
ARK Floors	2/15/2019	\$3,000	Importer/Distributor	Flooring
Belmont Carpets & Wood Flooring, Inc.	3/1/2019	\$10,000	Retailer	Flooring
Design Within Reach	3/12/2019	\$25,000	Importer/ Retailer	Furniture
CY Flooring, Incorporated	3/20/2019	\$67,000	Importer/ Retailer	Flooring
PCTC Cabinetry Inc.	5/1/2019	\$5,000	Importer/ Distributor	Cabinets

For more information on CARB's composite wood program please visit:

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/composite-wood-products-program>

For more information on CARB enforcement settlements, please visit:

<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/enforcement-policy-reports/enforcement-case-settlements>