

Formaldehyde Levels in FEMA-Supplied Trailers

Summary of a CDC Study in the Gulf Coast Region

Purpose

This flyer will tell you what researchers found in recent tests of indoor air in travel trailers and mobile homes supplied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Gulf Coast Region. Information from these tests may be of interest to you while you are finding permanent housing.

Background

In December 2007 and January 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) did testing to find out about levels of formaldehyde in the indoor air of travel trailers, park models and mobile homes supplied by FEMA to people displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Louisiana and Mississippi. CDC has analyzed the data from the testing and has findings for the health of residents living in FEMA-supplied trailers in those two states. **CDC's findings apply only to the two states where testing occurred**, although there are residents living in FEMA-supplied travel trailers, park models and mobile homes elsewhere around the country. FEMA is offering free indoor air testing for formaldehyde levels to any resident so you are better informed in making decisions about your health and housing.

What did CDC find?

Findings apply only to FEMA-supplied travel trailers and mobile homes in Louisiana and Mississippi.

- In many trailers, mobile homes, and park models tested, formaldehyde levels were elevated. Levels were higher than usually found in indoor air in most homes in the United States.
- Average levels of formaldehyde in all FEMA-supplied travel trailers and mobile homes were about 77 parts per billion (ppb). Breathing this much formaldehyde over time at this level can affect health.
- The formaldehyde level was probably higher in newer trailers and mobile homes and when the weather was warm.
- Formaldehyde levels were different in mobile homes, park homes, and travel trailers, but all types tested had some high levels.



CDC is a federal public health agency under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



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What does this mean for my family?

FEMA-supplied trailers are intended for temporary, emergency housing. Trailer and mobile home residents should try to relocate to permanent housing. Families living in trailers with children, elderly persons, or persons who already have an illness like asthma should consider relocating first.

- Families who live in FEMA-supplied travel trailers and mobile homes should spend as much time outdoors in fresh air as possible. This is especially important for families with children, elderly people, or those with chronic diseases such as asthma.
- Open windows as much as possible to let in fresh air.
- Try to keep the temperature inside travel trailers and mobile homes at the lowest comfortable setting.
- Do not smoke, and especially do not smoke indoors.
- If you have health concerns, see a doctor or another medical professional.

Where can I find help?

To help you in making decisions about your health and housing, FEMA is offering free indoor air testing for formaldehyde levels to any resident of a FEMA-supplied travel trailer or mobile home. To read the report, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/FEMATrailerFindings>.

To find out about housing options, please call FEMA at 1-866-562-2381, or TTY 1-800-462-7585.

To request to have your trailer tested for formaldehyde levels, please call FEMA at 1-866-562-2381, or TTY 1-800-462-7585.

For answers to questions about health, please call CDC 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636).



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