



MEDIA RELEASE

NO FORMALDEHYDE IN INTERIOR PAINTS FROM 1 JANUARY 2026

Minimising formaldehyde exposure improves indoor air quality

4 March 2024 – From 1 January 2026, the National Environment Agency (NEA) will require paints intended for application on interior surfaces of buildings (i.e., interior paints) sold in Singapore not to contain formaldehyde¹. This is in line with ongoing efforts to safeguard public health.

2 Formaldehyde is currently added to some interior paints as a preservative to inhibit bacterial and fungal growth. It can be emitted into the air and accumulate in indoor spaces. Short-term exposure to high levels of formaldehyde may cause health effects such as eye, nose, skin, and throat irritation. Long-term exposure may increase the risk of asthma and some forms of cancer.

Limit on formaldehyde content in interior paint products

3 From 1 January 2026, paint manufacturers and importers will have to submit test reports to NEA substantiating that the measured total in-can formaldehyde content in each interior paint product is below 0.01 per cent weight by weight². The test reports will have to be prepared by accredited laboratories³. Industrial paints⁴ and paints used for outdoor applications sold in Singapore are excluded from this requirement, but will have to be labelled to inform users that they contain formaldehyde and are meant for industrial or outdoor use only. NEA will carry out market surveillance and enforcement to ensure that the paints sold are compliant with the requirements. With the implementation of this control, all interior paint products containing formaldehyde will be phased out in Singapore.

4 To gather feedback, NEA had consulted the Singapore Paint Industry Association (SPIA), whose members comprise about 80 per cent of the local paint industry. Manufacturers and retailers shared with NEA that interior paints not containing formaldehyde were available in the Singapore market. NEA further sought public feedback from individual SPIA members and non-SPIA paint companies between 22 November to 13 December 2023⁵. Based on the feedback received, the paint industry is generally supportive of the proposed measures. Similar measures have been implemented in overseas markets, including China and the European Union.

¹ Trace amounts of formaldehyde may still be present as an impurity in certain raw materials used to make interior paint and the formaldehyde content of the paints should be below 0.01 per cent weight by weight.

² The formaldehyde content limit of 0.01 per cent weight by weight has been reviewed and benchmarked against the guidelines and regulatory requirements in other countries, as well as the paint industry's best practices. The formaldehyde content limit is also the lower detection limit of the analytical equipment used during testing.

³ Laboratories shall be accredited by accreditation bodies, such as the Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC), which are signatories to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA).

⁴ Paints for industrial applications include, but are not limited to, those conferring anti-fouling properties for marine vessels, and anti-corrosion properties for metal structures and equipment.

⁵ Details of the public consultation will be available on the REACH website on 4 March 2024.

Improving indoor air quality

5 Leading up to 1 January 2026, NEA encourages the public to look out for and use interior paints certified with the Singapore Green Labelling Scheme (SGLS) administered by the Singapore Environment Council (SEC), or the Singapore Green Building Product (SGBP) Certification Scheme administered by the Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC)⁶. Paints bearing these green labels are certified based on environmental sustainability, including the requirement to have no formaldehyde. The public is also advised to open doors and windows during and after painting work to improve overall ventilation and thereby dilute any formaldehyde that might be emitted. Commercial laboratories accredited for indoor air formaldehyde measurement (found at <https://sacinet2.enterprisesg.gov.sg/sacsearch/search>) can also be engaged to verify formaldehyde levels indoors.

6 NEA is committed to safeguarding a safe and conducive living environment. Guidance on improving ventilation and indoor air quality in buildings for a healthy indoor environment is available at <https://www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/public-cleanliness/environmental-cleaning-guidelines/advisories/guidance-on-improving-ventilation-and-indoor-air-quality-in-buildings-for-a-healthy-indoor-environment>.

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About National Environment Agency

The National Environment Agency (NEA) is the leading public organisation responsible for ensuring a clean and sustainable environment for Singapore. Its key roles are to improve and sustain a clean environment, promote sustainability and resource efficiency, maintain high public health standards, provide timely and reliable meteorological information, and encourage a vibrant hawker culture. NEA works closely with its partners and the community to develop and spearhead environmental and public health initiatives and programmes. It is committed to motivating every individual to care for the environment as a way of life, in order to build a liveable and sustainable Singapore for present and future generations.

For more information, visit www.nea.gov.sg

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⁶ Visual examples are provided in Annex.

Examples of Recognised Green Labels

Green Labelling Scheme (SGLS) administered by Singapore Environment Council (SEC)



Singapore Green Building Product (SGBP) Certification Scheme
administered by the Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC)



✓
GOOD
QS-XXX123



✓ ✓
VERY GOOD
QS-XXX123



✓ ✓ ✓
EXCELLENT
QS-XXX123



✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
LEADER
QS-XXX123