



## What Is CARB2 And Why Is It So Important?

If you've ever purchased flooring (or even if you haven't) you might have come across the term CARB2 but weren't so sure what exactly that meant.

CARB stands for the California Air Resources Board, and CARB2, in particular, is legislation enacted in 2007 to reduce the percentage of **formaldehyde** found in composite wood products, including:

- Hardwood plywood (HWPW)
- Particleboard (PB)
- Medium density fiberboard (MDF)
- Thin MDF

## What is formaldehyde and why is it in my flooring?

Formaldehyde is a known human carcinogen that's found from a variety of sources, including gasoline, tobacco smoke, fireplaces, propane, and wood-burning stoves. It's also found at low levels in natural wood.

It's used to make resin-like material and adhesives in composite wood products, which is why your flooring may have high emissions of it.

The health effects of prolonged exposure to high levels of formaldehyde include:

- Nose and throat irritation
- Eye irritation
- Respiratory issues (including triggering asthma symptoms)
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Cancer

With all of these possible side effects, California decided to set rules prohibiting the sale, supply, use, or manufacturing of composite wood product flooring that contain dangerous levels of formaldehyde.

**CARB2 has become the model of a national standard.**

## What to know about the types of flooring products covered by CARB2

CARB2 covers all finished goods made of composite wood. That means that any product (other than a panel) that contains HWPW-VC, HWPW-CC, PB, MDF or thin MDF is under the regulation of CARB2. This may include:

Flooring	Countertops
Moldings	Baseboards
Caskets	Rosettes
Furniture	Corbels
Cabinets	Shelving

And more

Manufacturers of these products are required to conduct emission testing to ensure compliancy.

## How does a product become CARB2 certified?

Seeing that label that suggests that your product is CARB2 certified gives consumers a sense of security and peace of mind. But what, exactly, is required to receive this certification?

To receive CARB approval, manufacturers have to submit three months of quality control test data for NAF (no-added formaldehyde) products, and six months for ULEF (ultra-low emitting formaldehyde) products. They must also provide primary or secondary method test data conducted by a third-party certifier.

This third-party process is used to verify compliance of manufacturers with applicable emission standards.

Record keeping and chain-of-custody is an important component of CARB2. CARB enforcers will oftentimes ask retailers to see chain-of-custody documents to verify the authenticity of the products emission characteristics.

## How can CARB2 protect consumers from products overseas?

Ultimately it's the importers responsibility to ensure compliance with CARB2. However, importers, distributors, retailers, fabricators and manufacturers can all be held responsible for the products sold and supplied.

## My flooring gives off a distinct odor. Should I be concerned about high-levels of formaldehyde?

Formaldehyde does give off an odor; however, other chemicals found in varnishes, decorative finishes, and paint may also contribute to potential odors. In other words, if your composite wood flooring gives off an odor, it does not necessarily mean its due to high levels of formaldehyde.

## What you should do as a consumer?

With standards such as CARB2 in place, consumers have far more power and control over what they purchase. There's little reason to purchase flooring products that don't adhere to these standards. Products that are deemed CARB2 certified have gone through extensive documentation, testing and more to ensure that your flooring does not compromise your health. If you have any questions regarding CARB2 or flooring products you're interested in buying, we encourage you to contact us directly.