

Formaldehyde – A Vital Tool Under Threat

Formaldehyde is a critical tool for funeral directors and embalmers. It is the primary – and most effective – preservative used in the majority of embalming fluids on the market today.

The goal of embalming is to:

1. **Sanitize** the body of someone who has died
2. Make a decedent **presentable** for viewing by loved ones
3. **Temporarily preserve** the body for viewing

More importantly, it **enables families the opportunity to view the body of their loved and say a final goodbye.**



The EPA selected formaldehyde for a risk assessment under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

TSCA requires the EPA to periodically conduct risk assessments to determine whether particular uses of chemicals present an unreasonable risk to human health or the environment.

If the EPA finds that a particular use of a chemical presents an unreasonable risk to health or the environment, the EPA must consider whether to require management controls to minimize harm.



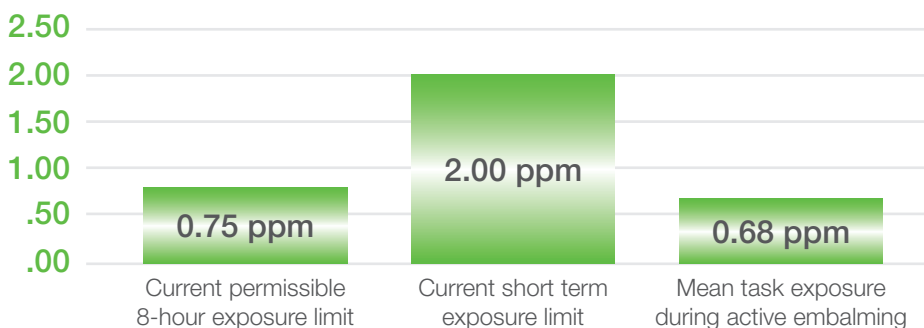
As it conducts its risk assessment, the EPA will be using available scientific data. Unfortunately, until now, the funeral profession has been lacking recent, reliable scientific data. Existing studies were mostly conducted prior to the 1980s and do not represent accurate embalming practices today.

To provide current data that characterized the typical preparation room in the 21st Century, the National Funeral Directors Association commissioned the *NFDA Formaldehyde Exposure Study*

The results of this study were published in the peer-reviewed scientific *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*, lending weight and credibility to our findings, which present a stark contrast to existing scientific data.



We found that the level of exposure to formaldehyde for funeral directors and embalmers during an active embalming is less than current permissible eight-hour and short-term exposure limits.



NFDA's data shows that trained funeral service professionals can effectively manage their exposure to formaldehyde to well-below currently acceptable levels.

If Congress decides to do oversight hearings on the EPA, NFDA is willing to share more information about the impact of the agency's activities on small businesses, like funeral homes.

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