



### **Prop 65 letter for distribution to consumers**

Proposition 65 is a 30-year old California labeling law designed to protect residents and their drinking water from chemicals that *may* cause cancer or reproductive harm. Essentially manufacturers must label a product if it has one of the now nearly 900 chemicals or substances in it (originally there were only 30 chemicals on the list). The list includes pesticides, heavy metals, Vitamin A at certain levels, and chemicals like lead, that are widely distributed through the environment in air, soil, water, and rocks. Even though no other state in the U.S. or Canada requires such labeling, some manufacturers apply the label to all of their product to make sure whatever gets shipped to California is labeled properly.

The chemicals and substances on the list have not been banned and not every compound labeled as a possible cancer-causing substance has been proven to the worldwide scientific community to actually cause cancer.

Prop 65 standards for warnings are often very stringent. For example, for reproductive toxicants, the level for warnings is 1000 times lower than the lowest level at which animal studies reported no reproductive health effect. A Prop 65 warning does not automatically mean that the product is unsafe.

The No Significant Risk Level for carcinogens is the level of exposure that would result in no more than one extra case of cancer in 100,000 people over a 70-year lifetime. So a compound can be unlabeled if a person exposed to the substance at the expected level for 70 years is estimated to have a 1 in 100,000 chance or less of getting cancer due to that exposure. The law also has similar strict cutoff levels for birth defects and reproductive harm.

Prop 65 warnings are seen throughout California in a wide range of settings -- in restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, schools, hospitals, parking garages, and even in the most family-friendly place in the world—Disneyland. Some online and catalog retailers also provide Prop 65 warnings on their websites or in catalogs for all their products and for all consumers just to avoid any problems.

Not to make light of it, however as noted above, parking garages must have signs as car exhaust may cause cancer; restaurants must post signs because alcohol or charcoal broiling, may cause cancer; grocery stores must post signs because fish may contain mercury and vegetables may contain lead from the soil. In furniture, sawdust is one of the compounds that may cause cancer. I'm not sure how you can

make furniture without having sawdust as a byproduct of manufacturing. Other compounds, like formaldehyde, are used in the subcomponents of production, such as particle board. At the end of the manufacturing process, it is considered stable and contained in the finished product, however, still require labeling in California. The finishes that we use on furniture, also will contain chemicals. It is impossible to get away from these trace chemicals in the world we live in. Again, remember that no other state in the U.S. or in Canada, require such labeling.