



FACTS ABOUT PROPOSITION 65

What is Proposition 65?

Proposition 65 is known as the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act passed by California voters in November 1986. The act is intended to ensure that the state's supply of water isn't contaminated with certain chemicals recognized by the State of California as causing cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. In addition, a company must warn individuals if they will be exposed to those chemicals in the course of the company's business.

What does Proposition 65 Require?

Proposition 65 requires the Governor to publish a list of chemicals that are known to the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. Agents that cause cancer are *carcinogens*; those that cause birth defects or other reproductive harm are called *reproductive toxicants*. This list must be updated at least once every year. As of March 10, 2000, over 700 chemicals have been listed.

Proposition 65 imposes certain controls for listed chemicals. These controls are designed to protect California's drinking water sources from contamination by these chemicals. In addition, Proposition 65 requires businesses to provide clear and reasonable warnings if they will expose individuals to any listed chemicals.

These warnings may be communicated in various ways, such as by labeling a consumer product, by posting signs at the workplace, by including the warning in a billing envelope, or by publishing notices in the newspaper. You probably have seen these warnings posted at gasoline stations, in restaurants, and in grocery stores.

What Does the Warning Mean?

The warning means that the business issuing the warning knows that one or more chemicals listed by the State of California are present in its product(s), in its workplace, or in its emissions to the environment.

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The chemicals that the public is most likely to be exposed to, are those generated from the incomplete combustion of natural gas. Incomplete combustion occurs whenever there isn't enough oxygen to burn the fuel completely. The combustion gases contain benzene, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, and soot.

Benzene is a naturally occurring substance released by volcanoes and forest fires and is present in many plants and animals. Benzene is a major industrial chemical made from coal and oil. Consumer products that may contain benzene include glues, adhesives, household cleaning products, paint strippers, art supplies, tobacco smoke, and gasoline.

Carbon monoxide is flammable colorless, odorless, tasteless, toxic, heavier-than-air gas produced during the incomplete combustion of fuel – natural gas, oil, coal, kerosene, etc.

Formaldehyde is a colorless, strong-smelling gas. It is widely used to manufacture building materials and numerous household products. Its most significant use in the homes is in adhesive resin in pressed wood products. Incomplete combustion, cigarette smoking, burning wood, and kerosene are other sources of formaldehyde.

Soot is a product of incomplete combustion of carbon-containing fuels, usually petroleum-based. This applies to all types of combustion processes including natural gas flames, wood fires, and candle flames.

Ways to avoid these combustion by-products is to ensure a trained professional inspects all of your fuel-burning appliances at the beginning of every heating season. Sempra Energy Utilities provides this service at no additional charge to its customers. You can also choose appliances that vent to the outside whenever possible, have them properly installed and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. In addition, you can avoid consumer products that contain these products.

Sempra Energy Utilities uses additional chemicals that are listed on the Proposition 65 list. These chemicals are not readily available to the public unless some unusual event occurs; for example, a car hits one of Sempra Energy Utilities facilities.

Sempra Energy Utilities takes pride in their safety and health program for their employees and for the public. Long before Proposition 65, our policy has been to provide a work environment

free of recognized occupational safety and health hazards and to protect the public from any recognized environmental hazards.

For more information, contact:

Office of Environmental Health Assessment
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<http://www.oehha.org/prop65.html>

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Division of Toxicology
1600 Clifton Road NE, M
Mail Stop E-29
Atlanta, GA 30333
1-800-447-1544

EPA Indoor Air Quality Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 37133
Washington, DC 20013-7133
1-800-438-4318
Ask for "*The Inside Story: A Guide to Indoor Air Quality*"

American Lung Association
1740 Broadway
New York, NY 10019-4374
1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)
<http://www.lungusa.org/>

National Safety Council
Environmental Health Center
1025 Connecticut Ave., NW
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1-202-293-2270