

# What Is CARB Phase 2

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CARB stands for **California Air Resources Board**, also known as Air Resources Board (ARB). It is a department of the **California Environmental Protection Agency**. It was established in 1967 with the purpose of maintaining and improving air quality, and researching causes and solutions of air pollution. CARB's mandates, such as CARB 2 compliant MDF, are strict and usually are considered the standard across the United States.

## What is CARB Phase 2 Compliant?

CARB Phase 1 and Phase 2 are a part of California's Composite Wood Products Regulation (CWP Regulation), which took effect in 2009 with Phase 1. The regulation has to do with reducing formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products, hardwood plywood, particleboard and medium density fiberboard (MDF). In the 2009 rollout of the CARB's Airborne Toxic Control Measure (ATCM), formaldehyde emissions were capped at .08 parts per million (ppm). CARB Phase 2 went into effect in 2010 and has much lower formaldehyde emissions than the previous phase; set at .05 ppm. A main reason why the CARB ATCM is the strictest air quality measure is because it CAPS emissions levels. Other air quality standards are averages.

## How to check if a product is CARB Phase 2 Compliant?

Any product made with hardwood plywood, particleboard or medium density fiberboard must be labeled with appropriate labeling. To check if a composite wood product is compliant for formaldehyde Phase 2, look for a label that includes the fabricator's name, date the good was produced, and language that indicates the product complies with CARB Phase 1 or CARB Phase 2 emission limit. These labels will often include "California 93120 Compliant for Formaldehyde" or "California Phase 2 Compliant."

## Why is CARB Phase 2 Compliance important?

This regulation is important because it ensures the air we breathe is healthy and free from carcinogens that can harm us. As of 2011, formaldehyde was added to the federal government's carcinogen list due to its health effects – often nose and throat irritation, burning eyes, wheezing or difficulty breathing, headaches, and nausea. Formaldehyde is a colorless gas and is emitted from a variety of sources – fireplaces, tobacco smoke, and wood burning stoves, to name a few. In the flooring industry, it's often used to make products including resins that are used as adhesives for composite wood products. The CWP regulation ensures formaldehyde emissions do not exceed the limit set.