

Taiwan Update on Formaldehyde Emission in Wooden Toys

According to various domestic and international health agencies, formaldehyde is classified as a probable human carcinogen. With respect to toys, formaldehyde is released by emission, particularly when it is newly bought and opened from the packaging for play.

In Taiwan, the Bureau of Standards, Metrology and Inspection (BSMI) conducted market surveillance on the safety of wooden toys, using the formaldehyde emission requirement for plywood as an evaluation tool. The BSMI has subsequently directed relevant units to more rigorously inspect and enforce formaldehyde content in imported and domestically made wooden toys. Toy importers and local manufacturers are being urged by BSMI to ensure wooden toys conform to the CNS standards on formaldehyde use.

According to Clause 5 (Material) of CNS 4797:2007 “Safety of Toys (General Requirements)”, toys or toy accessories shall be made from non-toxic materials. Thus, toys made from any wooden materials shall conform to the formaldehyde emission requirement as specified in the standard CNS 1349:2006 “Plywood”. Failure to comply with this formaldehyde emission requirement will be subject to the penalty of the Commodity Inspection Act and the products will not be allowed for sales in the market.

If there is significant amount of formaldehyde released, a strong malodor will be emitted. Formaldehyde is also soluble in water. If a child puts the wooden toy (which contains formaldehyde) in his mouth, he may also come in contact with it. When selecting wooden toys, parents should check that products are clearly labeled with toy manufacturer contact information, country of origin, age grading, warnings, material composition, and other important markings. Parents are also encouraged to check wooden toys for abnormal odors before giving it to children and to wash their children’s hands after play.