

Colours ranging from white to shades of yellow or brown depend on the amount of halogenides formed, which are proportional to the amount of arsenic ions in the sample. See back cover for colour photos of the results.

Once the reaction is completed, the test strip is removed and matched to a colour chart to obtain the exact number of ppm (mg/L) of arsenic in the tested sample.

Safety Tips

The reactions should be carried out in a fume hood in case any arsine escapes and the reagent on the mercury strips should not be touched with bare hands. Any readers who are concerned about exposure to arsenic from decks constructed prior to the CCA ban should be relieved to learn that leaching can be greatly diminished by oil-based, semi-transparent wood stains, the kind that soak into the wood. In fact, Stilwell found significantly lower concentrations of arsenic in the soil next to CCA decks that were well maintained.

More tips can be found at Health and Welfare Canada's site listed in the references.

References

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4. Health and Welfare Canada's fact sheet on CCA:
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The only thing that stands between you and your dreams is yourself. Have faith in yourself, and there is no limit to what you can accomplish!

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