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 $Sustainable \ Co-Synthesis \ of \ Glycolic \ Acid, Formamides \ and \ Formates \ from \ 1,3-Dihydroxyacetone \ by \ a \ Cu/Al_2O_3 \ Catalyst \ with \ a \ Single \ Active \ Sites$

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Co-Synthesis of Glycolic Acids, Formamides, and Formates on Copper/Alumina

Significance: An alumina-supported copper catalyst (Cu/Al_2O_3) was prepared by mixing copper(II) chloride with alumina, followed by calcination (eq. 1). Cu/Al_2O_3 catalyzed the oxidative degradation of 1,3-dihydroxyacetone with hydrogen peroxide in water to give glycolic acid in 91% yield with co-production of formic acid (eq. 2). The reaction also proceeded in the presence of amines or alcohols to afford the corresponding formamides or formates as co-products in 70–99% yield (eq. 3).

Comment: In the oxidation of 1,3-dihydroxyacetone, $\text{Cu/Al}_2\text{O}_3$ was recovered by centrifugation and reused twice without loss of its catalytic performance (fresh: 91% yield; third run: 88%). ICP analyses and a filtration test suggested that the reaction proceeds heterogeneously. XRD, HAADF-STEM, and N_2 adsorption–desorption experiments on the reused catalyst showed no obvious changes in its structure.

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