



Statement on Fire Safety of Upholstered Furniture

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The Sustainable Furnishings Council (SFC) is a coalition of manufacturers, retailers and designers dedicated to raising awareness and expanding the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices across the home furnishings industry. Formed in 2006, SFC helps companies reduce their environmental footprints as they grow, and helps consumers find healthy furnishings. SFC provides education, promotion, and networking opportunities to nearly 400 member companies, and to the residential furnishings industry at large.

SFC strongly supports eliminating flame retardant chemicals in upholstered furniture. The State of California, and many other specifiers, have moved away from open-flame to smolder test requirements such as TB 117-2013. We supported this change and urge adoption of a regulation based on TB 117-2013 as a national standard. We encourage all regulators, legislators, code officials and specifiers to replace existing open-flame requirements with a smolder standard based on TB 117-2013.

Given the increasing body of evidence that indicates the persistence, bio-accumulation and known health concerns of many flame retardants, we believe the risks associated with the use of these chemicals is greater than the fire risk from furniture without flame retardants. Studies have shown that added flame retardants may have little impact on the flammability of furniture and are likely to increase smoke toxicity during a fire.

Additionally, the potential for fires have been reduced by the following:

- Increased use of smoke detectors
- Improved smoke detector technology that reduces nuisance alarms
- Sprinkler systems
- Smoking bans
- Societal changes that include fewer cigarette smokers
- USA and Canada require fire-safe cigarettes designed to extinguish when not in use

As a result, furniture purchasers are requesting safer, more environmentally friendly products that do not contain flame retardant chemicals.

In addition to environmental and health concerns of flame retardant chemicals, we are concerned with the performance and cost implications of open-flame regulations. These regulations could require the use of fire-barriers or other materials that limit furniture design, negatively affect comfort, and reduce longevity of the products, and significantly increase product costs.

Manufacturers have indicated that open-flame requirements, especially those that lead to the use of barrier technologies (such as TB-133), may increase product costs up to 100%. Residential furnishings are not required to meet open-flame regulations. The adoption of an open-flame would lead to significant cost increases for the residential furniture industry.