



Legislation Summary: Flame Retardant Chemicals

Upholstered furniture flammability standards in California

In 1975, the state of California implemented a flame retardant standard. The Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair, Home Furnishings, and Thermal Insulation (BEARHFTI)'s Technical Bulletin 117 (TB117), required that materials, such as polyurethane foam, used to fill furniture be able to withstand a small open flame for at least 12 seconds. Flame retardant chemicals were used widely in upholstered furniture to meet this test requirements set forth in TB117.

Various studies since have linked exposure to flame retardant chemicals to hormone disruption, lower IQs, attention problems, reproductive issues, and cancer. Some of these chemicals can persist in the environment and accumulate in the bodies of people and animals.

New TB 117-2013 Standard

In 2012, Governor Brown asked BEARHFTI to review the state's four-decade-old flammability standards and recommend changes to help reduce the use of harmful flame retardant chemicals while continuing to ensure fire safety.

In 2013, BEARHFTI implemented Technical Bulletin 117-2013 (TB117-2013), to allow furniture manufacturers to meet a smoldering standard without the use of flame retardant chemicals. But retailers and customers still had no way to know whether flame retardant chemicals had been added to the piece of furniture.

How to let customers know if flame retardant chemicals are used or not

In 2014, California passed [Senate Bill 1019](#) (SB 1019), which requires labeling of upholstered furniture to disclose the presence of flame retardant chemicals on existing furniture labels.

While TB117 and TB117-2013 (the revised standard) are standards that outline the test for flammability; SB 1019 is a right to know bill that when enacted tells retailers and consumers whether flame retardant chemicals have been added to the upholstery material in that piece of furniture.

Concerned customers are learning the facts about chemical flame retardants in upholstered furniture and retailers can now have the answers needed to address them.

Flame retardant chemicals are not only harmful for customers; having furniture with these chemicals displayed around the store is not good for the health of your employees either. The chemicals constantly migrate into the air and settle into dust.

What to do with old stock

It is the responsibility of the furniture manufacturers and suppliers to ensure that their products meet the new standard and labeling requirements. Furniture that is manufactured after January 1, 2015 must meet the new standard requirements.

However, if you have old stock that was manufactured before 2015, you are allowed to sell this furniture until the stock has been exhausted. It is the responsibility of the furniture manufacturers to ensure that products meet TB117-2013 and its new labeling requirements.

NOTICE

THIS ARTICLE MEETS THE FLAMMABILITY REQUIREMENTS OF CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF ELECTRONIC AND APPLIANCE REPAIR, HOME FURNISHINGS AND THERMAL INSULATION TECHNICAL BULLETIN 117-2013. CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED NEAR OPEN FLAME OR WITH BURNING CIGARETTES.

The upholstery materials in this product:
____ contain added flame retardant chemicals
____ contain NO added flame retardant chemicals

The State of California has updated the flammability standard and determined that the fire safety requirements for this product can be met without adding flame retardant chemicals. The State has identified many flame retardant chemicals as being known to, or strongly suspected of, adversely impacting human health or development.

