

## **Furniture Flammability Regulations Fact Sheet**

### **Subject:**

Furniture Regulations, Furniture Flammability.

### **Relevant or Related Legislation:**

Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989 and 1993)

### **Current position:**

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is seeking to improve enforcement of the Regulations and is working with relevant bodies to achieve this.

### **Key Facts**

- Applies to domestic items of furniture only.
- Regulations do not apply to contract furniture or furnishings (e.g. hotels, restaurants etc.). Contact relevant supplier of material to ensure compliance for those purposes or the relevant trade association.
- Regulations cover the following items which contain upholstery: beds, headboards, mattresses, sofa-beds, nursery furniture, garden furniture which can be used indoors, furniture in new caravans, scatter cushions, seat pads and pillows and loose and stretch covers for furniture.
- The Regulations do not apply to sleeping bags, bed-clothes (including duvets), loose covers for mattresses, pillowcases, curtains and carpets. They may come under the General Product Safety Regulations.
- Those letting out properties or who are renting themselves, should contact their Local Trading Standards Department via their local Council for advice, as they take enforcement action.
- BIS does not hold information on types of fabric which are "safe" or "unsafe".

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1. [To what types of furniture do the Regulations apply?](#)
2. [What fabrics are allowed in furniture manufacture?](#)
3. [What should consumers be looking for when buying furniture?](#)
4. [What filling/ stuffing should be used upholstered parts of furniture?](#)
5. [Does cane furniture need to comply?](#)
6. [Does garden furniture need to comply?](#)

7. [What about furniture intended for export and old furniture?](#)

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**Q1. To what types of furniture do the Regulations apply?**

- Apply to domestic items of furniture only.
- Regulations do not apply to contract furniture or furnishings (e.g. hotels, pubs, restaurants etc.). Contact relevant supplier of material to ensure compliance for those purposes or the relevant trade association.

**Q2. What fabrics are allowed in furniture manufacture?**

It depends whether referring to the cover, filling or upholstery (i.e. combination of the cover fabric and filling material).

Any fabric supplied to provide or replace the permanent cover on furniture (except mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, cushions and baby nests) must either pass the appropriate match test (see Regulations) or if on a list of natural fabrics, can be offered in non-match resistant form provided that the furniture has or will contain a fire resistant interliner which itself passes the specified test. See Q4 for foam/non foam filling requirements.

There are 2 types of cigarette tests for upholstery. A full test is appropriate to visible parts of the upholstery. A modified cigarette test is appropriate to the non-visible parts of the upholstery.

**Q3. What should consumers be looking for when buying furniture?**

Consumers should be looking for furniture which is properly labelled as meeting the requirements of the Regulations.

All new furniture (except mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, scatter cushions, seat pads and loose and stretch covers for furniture) must carry a display label at the point of sale. It is the retailer's responsibility to ensure that furniture on display carries the correct label.

Furniture sold as a collection of items, such as three-piece suites must carry the appropriate display label on each individual item.

All new furniture (except mattresses and bed-bases) and loose and stretch covers for furniture must carry a permanent label. There are 2 versions - one long, the other short. It is primarily the responsibility of the first supplier (i.e. the manufacturer or importer) to ensure that the label gives the necessary information. However retailers also have a duty to ensure that the permanent label is on the goods when they supply them to consumers.

**Q4. What filling or stuffing should be used for upholstered parts of furniture?**

Any material that is included for the purpose of filling or stuffing the upholstered parts of the furniture must pass the appropriate tests (see p 20-30 of the Guidelines). This includes pads for insulating springs, tack rolls and piping cords which are contained within the cover fabric of the furniture.

- Foam fillings: i.e. polyurethane foam in slab or cushion form, or in crumb form and latex rubber form - must always be tested separately whether or not they are subsequently combined with other filling materials in the furniture.
- Non-foam fillings: there are two routes to compliance. Each filling may be tested singly or the fillings may be tested as a composite.

**Q5. Does cane furniture need to comply?**

Seating and back cushioning supplied with cane furniture must comply.

**Q6. Does garden furniture need to comply?**

The Regulations apply to outdoor furniture containing upholstery, which is also suitable for use in a dwelling. Therefore any upholstered garden furniture which is suitable for use in a conservatory of a dwelling, must meet the requirements for filling material and cover fabric.

**Q7. What about furniture intended for export and old furniture?**

The Regulations do not apply to exports of furniture.

The Regulations do not apply to furniture made before 1950 and to re-upholstery made before that date.

**Q8. What if I want to let out a property or if I am renting one?**

The Regulations apply to persons who hire out furniture in a course of business of theirs. This includes accommodation let in the course of business, such as holiday homes and residential furnished lettings (including houses, flats and bed-sits).

**Further Enquiries**

BIS cannot deal with individual enquiries, nor do we hold information on types of fabric which are "safe" or "unsafe". Please refer to the Guide to the Regulations or the legislation itself (Statutory Instrument No. 1324).

Those letting out properties or who are renting themselves, should contact their Local Trading Standards Department via their local Council for advice, as they take enforcement action.