

Furniture Flammability Advice for Consumers

The role of the Furniture Industry Research Association is to support organisations across the furniture supply chain. As such **we're unable to support consumers with specific enquiries.**

However we are aware some consumers have flammability concerns, so this guide offers general advice, alongside details of further resources (**page 7**) should you need any additional support.

Q1. What flammability regulations apply to furniture?

The [Furniture and Furnishings \(Fire Safety\) Regulations 1988 \(as amended in 1989, 1993 and 2010\)](#) **set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture**, furnishings and other products containing upholstery.

It is **illegal for furniture (whether manufactured in the UK or abroad) not to comply with the regulations**, which essentially state that:

- Filling materials must meet specified ignition requirement
- Upholstery composites must be cigarette resistant
- Covers must be match resistant (with certain exceptions)
- A permanent label must be fitted to every item of new furniture (not mattresses and bed-bases) (**see Q2**)
- A display label must be fitted to every item of new furniture at the point of sale (except mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, scatter cushions, seat pads, loose covers sold separately from the furniture and stretch covers) (**see Q3**)

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations are **enforced by local Trading Standards departments**, so as a consumer, if you need advice, clarification or additional information they are best placed to assist.

Q2. What permanent flammability labels should I look for?

Permanent labelling on furniture assists enforcement officers and shows compliance with specific ignition requirements for covers and fillings. **Do not remove permanent labels from furniture.**

Permanent labels need to be carried on all items of furniture except for mattresses divans and bed bases. Furniture sold as a collection of items, such as three-piece suites, must carry a label on each individual item.

Permanent labels may be incorporated into other labels, for example, care labels.

Example labels to look for include:

Example 1: A shorter label giving only the minimum information about the furniture

**CARELESSNESS
CAUSES FIRE**

Batch/ID No 0F 1234

To comply with The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations:
This article does not include a Schedule 3 interliner.

All foams, fillings and composites have been tested to ensure compliance with the relevant ignitability test. All covers and fillings have been tested to ensure that they are cigarette resistant. All covers have been tested to ensure that they are match resistant

This article contains CM Foam which passes the specified test. All upholstery is cigarette resistant.

Further details are available from your retailer.

- (a) The Caution
- (b) Batch number or identification number
- (c) Whether or not the article includes a fire-resistant interliner
- (d) Summary for the measures taken to ensure compliance with the Regulations

Example 2: A label giving full information about the furniture

**CARELESSNESS
CAUSES FIRE**

A N Other Ltd. AB1 2XY

AB 1234

1 March 1990

This article contains CM Foam which passes the specified test. All upholstery is cigarette resistant.

All cover fabric is cotton and is match resistant

This article does not include a Schedule 3 interliner

- (a) The Caution
- (b) Name and postal code of the first supplier in the United Kingdom
- (c) Batch number or identification number
- (d) Date manufactured or imported
- (e) Description of the filling material(s)
- (f) Description of covering material(s)
- (g) Whether or not the article includes a fire-resistant interliner

Q3. What display flammability labels should I look for?

Display labels contain valuable information regarding the steps taken to ensure compliance and should be specific to each piece of furniture. You can remove display labels upon delivery.

Display labelling indicating ignition resistance needs to be attached to all new furniture

(excluding mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, scatter cushions, seat pads, loose covers (sold separately from the furniture) and stretch covers). Furniture sold as a collection of items, such as three-piece suites or a set of dining chairs must all carry an appropriate display label on each item.

Example labels to look for include:

Example 1: *Appropriate for new furniture which meets the filling requirements and is cigarette and match resistant*



Example 2: *Appropriate for new furniture with a limited range of cover fabrics. The cover fabric is not match resistant, but the furniture has an interliner which passes the specified test. The furniture meets the filling requirements and is cigarette resistant.*



Example 3: *Appropriate for new furniture which meets the filling requirements and is cigarette resistant*



Q4. Can I donate furniture to charity without permanent flammability labels?

It's **illegal for charity shops to sell furniture without permanent flammability labels**, as such they will not accept donations without correct labelling.

Q5. Can I sell my old sell furniture without permanent flammability labels?

Yes, as an individual **you can sell your old furniture privately** on eBay etc. without flammability labels.

Q6. What about flame retardants?

Where necessary fabrics are treated to ensure fire safety in accordance with the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations. Chemicals used must conform to European [Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals \(REACH\) regulations](#) with regards to chemical safety.

As a consumer, if you have queries on flame retardants contact the [European Flame Retardants Association](#) your local [Trading Standards](#) or [Citizens Advice Bureau](#).

Q7. Can I purchase upholstery not treated with flame retardants?

It is possible as long as the product meets the full requirements of the **Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations (see Q1)**. Speak to your manufacturer, supplier or retailer for advice on any products which are naturally fire retardant.

Q8. I bought a mattress from a door-to-door salesman, is it safe?

We won't know whether the mattress is safe.

Our advice is **always to buy from a reputable manufacturer, retailer or supplier**. The [National Bed Federation](#) has a website full of bed buying advice for consumers, including what labelling to look for on mattresses (covered by British Standard [BS 7177:2008 Specification for resistance to ignition of mattresses, mattress pads, divans and bed bases](#)).

Q9. What about furniture in rented accommodation?

Landlords must ensure furniture and furnishings provided meet the [Furniture and Furnishings \(Fire Safety\) Regulations](#) (see Q1). Contact your local [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) or local authority if you have any concerns, or alternatively, the London Fire Brigade has [useful information here](#).

Q10. What about furniture in student accommodation?

Domestic landlords must ensure furniture and furnishings provided meet the [Furniture and Furnishings \(Fire Safety\) Regulations](#) (see Q1).

For student accommodation in halls of residence, contract furniture regulations apply under the [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#). If you have concerns about the standard of accommodation in the halls you should contact the University for advice.

Q11. What about nursery furniture?

Nursery furniture is subject to the [Furniture and Furnishings \(Fire Safety\) Regulations](#) (see Q1).

The Regulations apply to the following items which contain upholstery:

- Baby seats, bouncing cradles and baby rockers
- Baby car seats that are designed for home as well as car use
- Baby walking frames
- Cots and travel cots, carry-cots, carry-cribs, cribs and Moses baskets
- Highchairs, chair harnesses and playpens (including mattresses for playpens)
- Prams and push-chairs
- Upholstery liners supplied with any items listed above.

Baby nests are exempt from the match resistance tests.

Ensure you are checking for the correct flammability labels before purchase, or if you intend to donate unwanted furniture to charity (see Q2, 3 and 4).

Q12. What about garden furniture?

The **Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations (see Q1)** apply to **upholstered outdoor furniture** suitable for use in dwellings, including homes, conservatories, caravans etc.

The regulations don't apply to garden furniture which is unsuitable for use in dwellings (i.e. garden furniture which would not physically fit indoors), non-upholstered garden furniture (e.g. deck-chairs and parasols) and cover fabric of any removable canopy.

All upholstered cushions are required to satisfy the Regulations, each item should have a permanent label.

If you're looking for a reputable garden furniture manufacturer or distributor look for a member of the [Leisure and Outdoor Furniture Association \(LOFA\)](#).

Q13. What about curtains?

Curtains do not come under the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations. However, under the [General Product Safety Regulations 2005](#) manufacturers, suppliers and retailers are obliged to **provide a safe product**. Report any product concerns to your manufacturer, supplier or retailer, or your local [Trading Standards](#).

Q14. What about bedding?

Bed throws, blankets, quilts or bedcovers aren't covered by the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations. However, under [the General Product Safety Regulations 2005](#) there is an **obligation for manufacturers, suppliers and retailers to provide a safe product**. Report any product concerns to your manufacturer, supplier or retailer, or your local [Trading Standards](#).

Q15. What about wallcoverings?

Wallcoverings are outside FIRA's area of expertise, however the [British Coating Federation](#) may be able to assist. Tel 024 7693 5390 989 or email info@bcf.co.uk.

Further Resources

If you need any additional support, contact the most relevant organisation below:

Consumer Support

British Standards Institute

W: <https://shop.bsigroup.com> E: cservices@bsigroup.com T: 0345 086 9001

Citizens Advice Bureau

W: www.citizensadvice.org.uk T: 0808 223 1133

Trading Standards Institute

W: <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumer-help> E: consumers@tsi.org.uk T: 0808 223 1133

Associations

Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers (AMUSF)

W: <https://amusf.org> E: enquiries@amusf.org T: 07926 128899 or 07938 905294

British Coatings Federation

W: <https://coatings.org.uk> E: info@bcf.co.uk T: 024 7693 5390

British Furniture Manufacturers

W: <https://www.bfm.org.uk> E: info@bfm.org.uk T: 01295 724202

National Bed Federation

W: <https://bedadvice.co.uk> E: help@bedadvice.co.uk T: 01756 799950

The Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman

W: <https://www.fhio.org> E: info@fhio.org T: +44 (0)333 241 3209

The Leisure and Outdoor Furniture Association (LOFA)

W: <https://lofa.co.uk> E: info@lofa.com T: 01952 977569

Regulations

Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1988/1324/contents/made>

General Product Safety Regulations <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1803>

Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) regulations
www.hse.gov.uk/reach