

National Furniture Flammability Standard



Fact Sheet

Upholstered furniture is one of the most flammable items in the American home. In just a few minutes, a sofa fire can engulf an entire living room in flames, filling the home with thick, dark smoke and toxic gases. The upholstered furniture in prisons is safer than upholstered furniture in American homes. For about the cost of a pizza, furniture manufacturers can incorporate technologies that will help prevent fires from igniting upholstered furniture.

General Fire Statistics - 2005

- In 2005, fire killed more people in the United States than all natural disasters combined.
- In 2005, 78% of all structure fires (396,000 fires) occurred in residential properties.
- 3,675 civilians lost their lives as the result of fire in 2005.
- 82% (3,030) of all civilian fire fatalities occurred in the home in 2005.
- In 2005, a residential fire occurred every 80 seconds. A civilian fire death occurred every 143 minutes. A civilian fire injury occurred every 29 minutes.
- About 18,000 civilian fire injuries were reported in 2005. Nearly 14,000 of those occurred in residences.
- Direct property damage due to fires was estimated at \$10.7 billion in 2005.

(Sources: Overall Fire Picture – 2005, US Fire Administration, August 2006; Fire Loss in the United States During 2005, National Fire Protection Association, September 2006)

Furniture Fires

- Fires originating in upholstered furniture account for more than 20% of all fire-related deaths in residential structures.
- About 10 people die each week as a result of residential upholstered furniture fires. Most of these could be addressed by flammability standards.
- In recent years, an annual average of 360 civilians die and 740 are injured as a result of upholstered furniture fires ignited by cigarettes and small open flame sources – the types of fires that could be addressed by flammability standards.
- Societal costs associated with upholstered furniture fires amount to more than \$2 billion annually.

(Source: 1999 Revised – 2002 Residential Fire Loss Estimates, US Consumer Product Safety Commission, November 2005)

California vs. The U.S

- California is currently the only state in the U.S. with fire safety regulations for upholstered furniture.
- According to the California Bureau of Home Furnishings, fatality rates fell by more than 25% in California following the state's adoption of furniture fire standards in the 1970s.
- Close to 4,000 fires and 500 deaths would have been prevented over the 10-year period of 1985 to 1994 if the rest of the U.S. had adopted a fire standard for upholstered furniture similar to the one in California.

(Source of Projection: California Upholstered Furniture Fire Losses vs. the Rest of the U.S., National Association of State Fire Marshals, October 1999)