



The Industry Voice for Workplace Solutions

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Position Paper

Elimination of Fire Retardant Chemicals in Office Furniture Products

BIFMA International is an organization dedicated to all aspects of safety as it relates to the products that our members manufacture, including the mechanical, ergonomic, sustainability and flammability characteristics of furniture.

Given the increasing body of evidence that indicates the persistence, bio-accumulation and potential health aspects of many fire retardants, we believe the risks associated with the use of these chemicals is greater than the hazard associated with the fire risk from furniture without fire retardants. This is especially true given the fire safety record of office spaces due to today's fire prevention technology such as the increased use of smoke detectors and sprinkler systems, and societal changes that include fewer smokers and smoking bans in buildings. Additionally, many furniture purchasers are looking for safer, more environmentally friendly products that do not contain chemicals of concern, including fire retardants.

Therefore, BIFMA strongly supports the elimination of fire retardant chemicals of concern in all manufactured products.

To lead the industry towards the development of more sustainable products and processes, BIFMA developed the ANSI/BIFMA e3 Furniture Sustainability Standard for business and institutional furniture in 2008. This promises to further improve the environmental performance of office furniture products. BIFMA will continue to support the EPA's Design for the Environment staff as partners in seeking a solution to the dilemma between fire safety requirements and environmental concerns.

BIFMA calls on all relevant organizations to support education and research efforts to reduce the environmental and human health risks from fire retardants. We will actively work with legislators, regulators, manufacturers, suppliers and the scientific community in solving these challenging issues by supporting initiatives that promote the elimination of fire retardant chemicals of concern.