

A Guide to the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations

Introduction

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 ¹ (as amended in 1989 ² and 1993 ³) set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture, furnishings and other products containing upholstery.

This guide, which has been prepared in consultation with the Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards and the Institute of Trading Standards Administration, is intended to help suppliers of these products understand how the new Regulations affect them.

It is not an authoritative interpretation of the Regulations, which is a matter for the courts.

The guide explains the requirements in general terms, but it does not cover all the details. You should refer to the Regulations themselves for a full statement of the requirements. Copies of the Regulations can be obtained from The Stationery Office Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, or through The Stationery Office bookshops.

¹ Statutory Instrument 1988/No. 1324, The Stationery Office Ltd £1.90 net

² Statutory Instrument 1989/No. 2358, The Stationery Office Ltd £1.35 net

³ Statutory Instrument 1993/No. 207, The Stationery Office Ltd £0.65 net

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Product ranges covered

These include any of the following which contain upholstery:

- furniture intended for private use in a dwelling, including children's furniture
- beds, head-boards of beds, mattresses (of any size)
- sofa-beds, futons and other convertibles
- nursery furniture
- garden furniture which is suitable for use in a dwelling
- furniture in new caravans
- scatter cushions and seat pads
- pillows

The Regulations also apply to:

- loose and stretch covers for furniture

The Regulations do **not** apply to:

- sleeping bags
- bed-clothes (including duvets)
- loose covers for mattresses
- pillowcases
- curtains
- carpets

Suppliers affected

The Regulations apply to all persons in the business supply chain from the supply of materials for use in furniture and furnishings through to supply of the finished article. They affect:

- persons who supply filling material and fabrics to the furniture industry or direct to consumers
- persons who supply furniture, furnishings or re-upholstery services. These include:
 - manufacturers
 - importers
 - wholesalers
 - retailers (including mail order traders)
 - persons who hire out furniture
 - persons who supply second-hand furniture in the course of business or trade. This includes auctioneers and some **charities**

- re-upholsterers

The Regulations also apply to persons who hire out furniture in the course of a business of theirs. This embraces furniture included in accommodation let in the course of business, such as:

- holiday homes
- residential furnished lettings (including houses, flats and bed-sits)

The Regulations therefore apply to **landlords, estate agents and letting agents** who let such accommodation during the course of a business of theirs.

Charities

In the Department's view, the simple distribution of second-hand furniture by a charity in pursuance of its charitable objectives to needy persons, either free of charge or at a nominal amount only, would be unlikely to constitute a supply in the course of business. On the other hand, shops selling furniture to raise funds for charitable purposes would constitute a business activity and the Regulations will apply to the furniture sold in this case. Individual charities should take legal advice on the circumstances surrounding all their particular operations.

Holiday homes and residential Lets

The Regulations apply to furniture and furnishings included in holiday homes and residential furnished accommodation (such as houses, flats and bed-sits) which are let in the course of business. They therefore affect persons (including estate agents and letting agents) who let such accommodation as a business activity. Amendment Regulations ¹, made in February 1993, mean that furniture not meeting the *fire resistance requirements* of the 1988 Regulations can continue to be supplied in accommodation until **31 December 1996**, provided that it has previously been included in the letting of the same accommodation.

From **1 March 1993**, furniture (whether new or second-hand) which is additional to or in replacement of existing furniture in accommodation let prior to this date must comply with all the *fire resistance requirements*.

Also, from **1 March 1993**, all furniture (except furniture made before 1950) included in accommodation which is made available for let for the first time from this date must meet all the *fire resistance requirements*.

Despite the provision in the 1993 Amendment, not all non-compliant furniture need necessarily have been replaced by 1 January 1997. In fact, section 46(8) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 (CPA) provides that where goods have at any time been supplied or hired out, a continuation or renewal of such hire or loan (which may be on different terms) with the same person shall not constitute a further supply or goods to that person. Therefore, furniture which has been supplied to tenants by landlords who have been able to take advantage of the 1993 Amendment need not be replaced until a new agreement is made with a new tenant, since it is only in that case that a new supply will have taken place. In other words, in effect, furniture supplied in properties before 1 March 1993 need not be replaced until a new supply is made, and this may well be after 31 December 1996. All other furniture supplied in property made available after 1993 and all new or replacement furniture, as described above.

The *fire resistance requirements* for the range of products covered by the 1988 Regulations are described in '**What suppliers need to do**'.

The responsibilities of managing agents and landlords

The responsibility imposed by the Regulations applies to the actual supplier of furniture, if that supplier is acting in the course of a business of his. For a residential furnished let this may be either the landlord or the agent. Where furniture is supplied by a landlord, the application of the Regulations will depend on whether or not the landlord is acting in the course of a business of his in letting that property. For example, a landlord who lets his property on a one-off short-term basis (whilst, for example, he is temporarily working away from home) is unlikely to do so in the course of a business and the Regulations will not apply to the landlord in this case. On the other hand, a much longer let or series of lets, where the landlord views the property's primary purpose as a source of income rather than his residence, is likely to be considered a business activity. In this case a landlord is a supplier for the purposes of the Regulations and the furniture he provides must comply with their requirements.

Whether an estate or managing agent can be considered a supplier for the purposes of the Regulations will depend on the capacity in which he acts for the landlord. An agent who is employed by a landlord to find a suitable tenant for a property and to manage an agreement for its letting between the landlord and the tenant is **not** making a supply of the furniture. In general, an agent will not be making a supply for the purposes of the Regulations provided that the contract for the letting of the property, including the future, is between the owner and the tenant. In such a case the Regulations will apply to the landlord only if the supply of the furniture is in the course of business of his as described in the preceding paragraph.

On the other hand, where an agent, acting in the course of business of his, enters into a contract with the tenant under which he (the agent) agrees to let a furnished property on behalf of a landlord, the agent has assumed responsibility for the actual letting of the property and compliance with the Regulations. In summary, an agent will be responsible for ensuring that furniture complies with the Regulations only where he is the actual supplier for the purposes of the Regulations and this will be a matter of fact.

Though the interpretation of the legislation is ultimately a matter for the courts, this sets out the Department's view as to the application of the Regulations to the activities of landlords and management agents.

1 Statutory Instrument 1993/No. 207, The Stationery Office Ltd £0.65 net

Furniture provided by way of a statutory function

The provision of **any** goods within the scope of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 (CPA) in connection with the performance of **any** statutory function (section 46(1)(e)) irrespective of the scope of section 46(1)(a) - which refers to the selling, hiring-out or lending of goods and is quite independent of 46(1)(e) - will constitute a supply. As a consequence, such a supply will be subject to section 10, and to any applicable regulations made under section 11 of the 1987 Act - including the Furniture Regulations.

The statutory duties of, for example, local authorities that provide accommodation for the aged, infirm and needy by virtue of the National Assistance Act 1948 (as amended), or accommodation for homeless persons by virtue of the Housing Act 1985, may involve the authorities in the provision of goods within the meaning of section 46(1)(e) of the 1987 Act. Since section 46(1)(e) of the CPA is concerned with providing goods this part of the definition of supply is not confined to 'selling, hiring-out or lending'.

'Statutory providers' will no doubt wish to take legal advice as to the provision of goods in circumstances of that kind, notably on whether the position differs if accommodation is provided in premises which the authority manages itself, in premises which another local authority manages or in premises managed by a

voluntary organisation or others. The wider scope of 'provision' under section 46(1)(e) may also have implications for the treatment of furniture in communal areas. Furniture in property not provided as part of a statutory function, and therefore not within section 46(1)(e) of the CPA, will, in the Department's opinion, not be required to comply with the Regulations, assuming, of course, that the furniture is not supplied in some other manner falling within section 46(1).

Exemptions

The Regulations do **not** apply to:

- exports of furniture
- furniture made before 1950, and re-upholstery of furniture made before that date

What suppliers need to do

Filling material supplied direct to consumers

Any filling material (whether foam or non-foam) supplied for use in furniture or re-upholstery must pass the **appropriate test**.

Filling material supplied to business users

All **foam** fillings that are supplied to furniture manufacturers and re-upholsterers must pass the **appropriate test**.

Non-foam fillings which are supplied to furniture manufacturers and re-upholsterers need not pass any fire resistance test.

This means that furniture manufacturers and re-upholsterers will be responsible for ensuring that any non-foam filling material used in furniture provides the required level of fire resistance. In other words, if the filling material is to form part of a composite filling, the manufacturer must ensure that the final composite passes the **appropriate test(s)**. If, on the other hand, the filling material is to be used as a single filling in the finished article, the furniture manufacturer should specify his requirement for a filling material which passes the **single filling test**.

Advice to suppliers of filling material

Suppliers of filling material (whether they supply direct to consumers or to business users) are strongly advised to ask the purpose for which the filling material is sought and give advice to the user about its suitability for use in furniture etc.

Furnishings fabrics

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(s)** (which depend on whether the fabric is to be used to provide a visible or non-visible part of the cover)
or if one of the fabrics listed below, it 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. These are fabrics made from material containing at least 75 per cent by weight of:

- cotton
- flax
- viscose
- modal
- silk
- wool

whether used separately or together and are not coated with polyurethane or a polyurethane preparation.

This requirement applies to any person who supplies fabric to the trade or direct to the consumer where he knows or has reasonable cause to believe that it will be

used for covering furniture (except mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, cushions and baby nests).

Therefore, suppliers need to ask the purpose for which the fabric is sought and give advice about its suitability for use on furniture, and the conditions under which it can so be used. Fabric suppliers should be aware that furniture manufacturers will need to know whether the fabric which they are ordering will enable the complete furniture to pass **the appropriate cigarette test(s)** (again depending on whether the fabric is to be used to provide a visible or non-visible part of the upholstery). However, these tests can only be carried out on the final upholstery composite which will not always be known to the fabric supplier. We suggest therefore that the supplier arranges to have the cover fabric tested for cigarette resistance using standard polyurethane foam. This will enable him to give the furniture manufacturer a good indication of its likelihood to pass the **appropriate cigarette test** for the finished article.

Domestic upholstered furniture (except mattresses, bed-bases, pillows and cushions which are dealt with in the later sections)

This includes all upholstered seating furniture (including children's furniture) as well as upholstered articles such as music stools, foot stools and pouffes, bean bags and floor cushions, which are intended for private use in a dwelling. The Regulations also apply to domestic upholstered furniture that is supplied in kit form for self-assembly.

The Regulations apply to domestic furniture which contains **any** amount of filling material. Domestic upholstered furniture (whether complete or ordered with the customers' own choice of cover fabric) must:

- pass the appropriate cigarette test(s)
- contain only filling material which passes the appropriate test(s); and
- the cover fabric of this furniture must also pass the appropriate match test(s) or the **alternative route** to compliance described, and carry the **appropriate display and permanent labels**

The cigarette and match resistance requirements

Cover fabric on all parts of upholstered furniture (whether or not the cover is over a filling material) must be match resistant, and the upholstery must be cigarette resistant. The Regulations provide separate tests for different parts of the cover on the furniture.

These are modified cigarette and match tests for fabric used on the non-visible parts of the furniture. The non-visible parts are:

- a. any part of the cover on that part of the furniture on which any back, arm or seat cushions rest
- b. the underside or reverse side of any seat or back cushions which are not designed to be reversible
- c. the underside of any arm cushions which are not designed to be reversible **provided that** they are secured in such a way that they cannot be displaced in normal use; and
- d. the dust cover on the underside of the article of furniture.

The modified match test is appropriate to cover fabric on any of the above parts of the furniture. The modified cigarette test is appropriate to the non-visible parts of upholstery only.

All other parts of the furniture are visible parts, and cover fabric on these parts must also pass the **full match test**. Visible parts of the upholstery must also pass the **full cigarette test**.

Alternative to the match resistance requirement for permanent covers

An alternative to the match test requirement is available for furniture with a limited range of cover fabrics, which are described in the section on **furnishing fabrics**. These fabrics may be used in non-match-resistant form over any part of the furniture provided that the furniture contains a fire-resistant interliner. Furniture using such cover fabrics must still pass **the appropriate cigarette test(s)**.

You should note that the Regulations provide for the use of the alternative interliner route to compliance for the permitted fabrics over the non-visible parts of the furniture provided that the latter fabric passes the modified cigarette test.

Coverage of the interliner

The purpose of the interliner, referred to above, is to compensate for the non-match-resistance of the cover fabric. It follows that the interliner should protect the fillings on all surfaces where such fabric is used, i.e. the interliner should extend to all areas that are covered by non-match-resistant fabric.

Removable covers

Removable covers which are supplied with the furniture are regarded as permanent covers for the purposes of the Regulations. Similarly, replacement covers which are supplied by the manufacturer of the furniture at a later date should be regarded as permanent covers. But removable covers which are supplied by a producer other than the manufacturer of the furniture must be classed as **loose covers**. This distinction is made because only the manufacturer of the furniture concerned will have detailed knowledge of how it complies with the Regulations.

Filling material

Any material that is included for the purpose of filling or stuffing the upholstered parts of the furniture must pass the **appropriate test(s)**. 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 foam - must always be tested separately whether or not they are subsequently combined with other filling materials in the furniture.

For **non-foam fillings** there are two routes to compliance. Each filling may be tested singly or the fillings may be tested as a composite. When the latter route is chosen and it is proposed that a foam filling should be added to the composite, the foam must first be tested separately, and then included again in the composite test. Furniture manufacturers and re-upholsterers should note the special position regarding the supply of **non-foam fillings** for use in furniture.

Parts of the furniture that are not subject to the requirements of the Regulations

The following parts of the furniture do not need to comply with the fire resistance requirements:

- braids and trimmings which are removable features
- lightweight scrimmings for foams and other fillings
- springs

Cane furniture

Upholstery for cane furniture is often supplied by a manufacturer other than the producer of the frame. Seating and back cushioning supplied with cane furniture must meet the requirements for **domestic upholstered furniture**. Such upholstery cannot be regarded as **scatter cushions** for which there are different requirements.

Garden furniture

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, for example, must meet the new requirements for filling material and cover fabric.

The requirements for this type of garden furniture are the same as those for **domestic upholstered furniture** and apply to manufacture, imports and retail sales.

The Regulations **do not** apply to garden furniture which is unsuitable for use in a dwelling or to non-upholstered garden furniture, such as deck-chairs and parasols. Accordingly, the cover fabric of any removable canopy part of upholstered garden furniture which is intended to act as sunshade or waterproof cover when the article is used in the open air need not meet any fire resistance requirements.

Furniture in caravans

The Regulations apply to upholstered furniture (including beds) supplied with **new** caravans (but not motor vehicles). The requirements are the same as those for **furnishing fabrics** and for **beds, sofa-beds and mattresses**. British Standard 7177 is also relevant to the cover fabric of mattresses etc in new caravans for which the requirements listed under the '**Low Hazard**' classification of this standard will be appropriate.

Nursery furniture

The Regulations apply to the nursery equivalents of domestic **upholstered** furniture and beds, and to other upholstered products which are designed to contain a baby or small child. These include:

- **mattresses**
- **cushions**
- **pillows**

and any of the following items which contain upholstery:

- **baby nests**
- baby seats/bouncing cradles/baby rockers
- baby car seats that are designed for home as well as car use
- baby walking frames

- cots/travel costs
- carry-cots
- carry-cribs/cribs/moses baskets
- highchairs
- chair harnesses
- playpens (including mattresses for playpens)
- prams
- push-chairs

The Regulations also apply to:

- upholstered liners which are supplied with any of the above items

You should note that when a combination article includes **any** of the functions referred to in the above paragraphs, the complete article should meet all the requirements relating to that particular function (or functions).

The requirements for nursery furniture are the same as those for **domestic upholstered furniture**. **Baby nests** are exempt from the match resistance tests, and need only meet the requirements for fire-resistant filling material and cigarette-resistant upholstery.

The Regulations **do not** apply to:

- baby bouncers (suspended from doorways etc)
- bed-clothes
- bumpers for cots
- foot muffs/cosy toes
- baby carriers/slings/rucksacks which are designed to be worn outdoors
- baby changing mats/dresser units
- play mats

The cover fabric of any removable hoods or covers of prams, push-chairs or carry-cots, which are intended to act as a sunshade or waterproof cover when these articles are used in the open air, need not meet any fire resistance requirements.

Head-boards of beds

Upholstered head-boards must meet the requirements for **domestic upholstered furniture**. Accordingly, they should pass the **tests required** for this type of furniture. You should note that the fabric on the back of a head-board is a visible fabric for the purposes of the Regulations.

Mattresses and bed-bases

Filling material

The Regulations apply to filling material in these items which must meet the **requirements described**. For mattresses and bed-bases with a single filling, the filling material should be tested using BS 5852 methods of test.

A different method of test is provided for mattresses and bed-bases which contain **two or more filling materials**.

Cover fabric or ticking

The Furniture Regulations do not specify fire resistance requirements relating to the cover fabric of bed-bases and mattresses. However, the General Product Safety Regulations 1994 ¹, which implement the EC Directive on general product safety, place a general duty on suppliers of consumer products to supply only products which are safe. The GPS Regulations specify that aspects of safety of products which are not subject to specific regulations will be assessed taking into account published standards of safety relating to those products. BS 7177 ², which lays down specifications for the cigarette and match resistance of bed-bases and mattresses, may be an appropriate standard for this purpose. **The** relevant requirements for domestic beds are listed under the 'Low Hazard' classification of the standard. Penalties for infringing the general safety duty are similar to those applying under the Furniture Regulations.

Sofa-beds, futons and other convertibles

The Regulations apply to furniture which is designed to be used as seating furniture as well as a bed.

All parts of convertible furniture in which the seating also provides the sleeping surface should meet the filling material and cover fabric requirements for **domestic upholstered furniture** using BS5852 methods of test. Convertible furniture having a separate mattress which is stored under the seating may meet the BS 7177 specification for cigarette and match resistance of the cover fabric or ticking of the mattress. Cover fabric on all other parts of such convertible furniture should meet the requirements for **domestic upholstered furniture** using BS 5852 methods of test. The requirements relating to the filling material of mattresses are described at **Mattresses and bed-bases**.

All convertible furniture must carry the **appropriate display and permanent labels for furniture**. You should note, in relation to any separate mattress component of convertible furniture which conforms with BS 7177, that this Standard also contains its own specified label for mattresses and bed-bases.

Pillows, scatter cushions and seat pads

The Regulations apply only to the filling material of pillows, scatter cushions and pads of the type supplied for use on the seats of wooden chairs. Foam fillings must pass **the specified test**.

When non-foam fillings are used **either** the filling material itself must pass the appropriate test or, if the item has primary cover, then the filling material together with that primary cover must pass **the specified test**. The Regulations **do not** apply to the decorative cover of scatter cushions and seat pads, or to covers for these items which are sold separately.

Bean bags and floor cushions

The requirements for these items are the same as those for **domestic upholstered furniture**.

Loose covers and stretch covers for furniture

These are covers supplied separately from the furniture. Loose covers for upholstered furniture must be match-resistant when tested over standard polyurethane foam.

Stretch covers which meet the elasticity specification in BS 4723 should be tested over combustion-modified foam for match resistance. There are, however, different requirements for **removable covers** which are supplied with the furniture.

The Regulations **do not** apply to pillow-cases or loose covers for mattresses and bed-bases.

Re-upholstery

The Regulations apply to the re-upholstery of furniture which was made after 1 January 1950. All filling material and cover fabric used in re-upholstering such furniture must meet the new levels of **fire resistance**.

This means that any upholstery materials which the upholsterer supplies or adds to the furniture in the course of refurbishing it must pass the **appropriate test(s)**. Where, for example, only re-covering is requested by the customer, the re-upholsterer is not obliged to replace any non-conforming filling material which the furniture may contain. However, in such circumstances we strongly advise that the re-upholsterer should draw the fire risk to the customer's attention. Any filling material which the re-upholsterer adds to the existing filling must, of course, meet the new requirements. In ordering **upholstery materials** the re-upholsterer should seek advice from his supplier about their suitability for use in furniture.

Second-hand furniture

The Regulations apply to second-hand furniture sold by a person in the course of business of his (including auction). However, they do not apply to furniture manufactured before 1 January 1950.

¹ Statutory Instrument 1994/No. 2328, *The Stationery Office Ltd* £1.95 net.

² BS 7177: 1989 (*British Standard Specification for Resistance to ignition of mattresses, divans and bed-bases*).

The labels

Display labels

All new furniture except:

- mattresses and bed-bases
- pillows, scatter cushions and seat pads
- loose cover and stretch covers for furniture

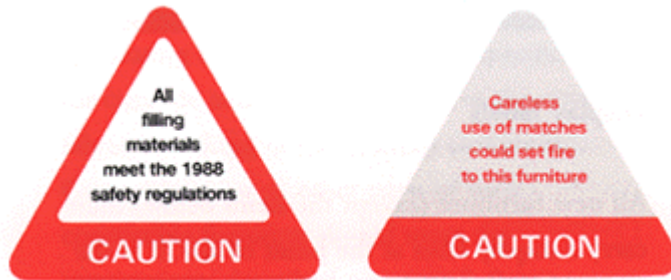
must carry a display label at the point of sale. It is the retailer's responsibility to ensure that furniture on display carries the correct label.

The Regulations contain full-size illustrations of display labels in colour. Reduced illustrations are shown on the next page to explain the meaning of the labels.

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

In all cases the display label must be attached to the furniture in a prominent position so that the label will be clearly visible to a potential purchaser of the furniture and the wording on both sides can be read with reasonable ease. The Regulations **do not** require the following items to carry a display label:

- mattresses and bed-bases
- pillows, scatter cushions and seat pads
- **loose covers** and **stretch covers** for furniture



Appropriate to new furniture which meets the filling requirements and is cigarette resistant, that is baby nests. The word "product" may be substituted for the word "furniture" on the second side of this label.



Appropriate to new furniture which meets the filling requirements and is both cigarette and match resistant.



Appropriate to 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.

Permanent labels

All new furniture (except mattresses and bed-bases ¹⁾, and **loose** and **stretch** covers for furniture must carry a permanent label. It is primarily the responsibility of the first supplier (i.e. the manufacturer or the importer) to ensure that the

label gives the necessary information, but retailers are also under a duty to ensure that the permanent label is on the goods when they supply them to the consumers.

Choice of permanent label

Suppliers can choose between two versions of the permanent label:

- either** a label giving full information about the furniture
- or** a shorter label giving only the minimum information about the furniture. Where the first supplier decides to use the shorter label, **any person** who supplies that furniture must make available to the enforcement agency, on request, certain information about the furniture (see **Information requirements at point of sale**).

A full description of what must be included in these labels is given in Parts II and III, respectively, of Schedule 7 to the Regulations. Completed examples of the labels are shown below. (These are illustrations only. See next paragraph about the size of the letters.)

Size of letters

All words and numbers on the permanent label must be in medium letters of **at least** 10 point (approx 2.5 millimetres high) in upper or lower case. The letters must be legible, in durable print, and appear on a label of sufficient colour contrast to enable them to be seen clearly.

Position of the label

The label must be securely attached to the furniture (i.e. cannot be removed without causing damage to the label or the product). It may appear on any external surface of the article.

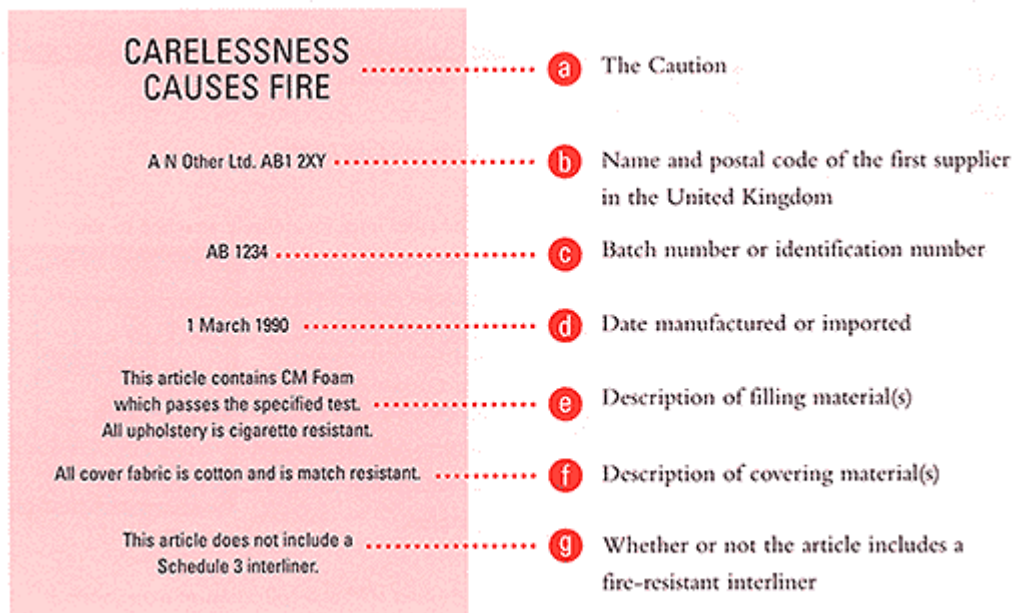
In the case of seating furniture the platform underneath any removable seating cushions may be regarded as an external surface for this purpose.

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

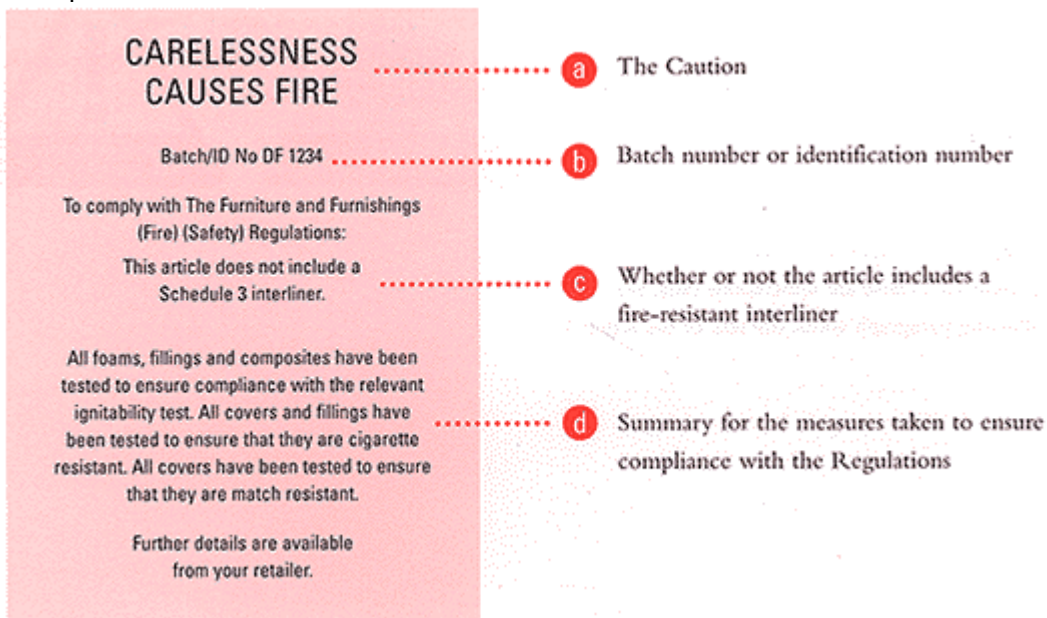
In the case of **loose** or **stretch** covers for furniture the label may appear on the underside of the fabric.

The following are examples of the permanent label for a item of domestic upholstered furniture.

Example of label giving full information:



Example of shorter label:



Reduced information for some articles

Certain articles do not require all the above information to be given. The following is a list of these articles, together with the information which needs to be given on the full and shorter variants of the label.

ARTICLE	RELEVANT ITEMS FOR FULL LABEL	RELEVANT ITEMS FOR SHORTER LABEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loose covers and stretch covers for furniture (see page 12) 	a , b and f	a and d
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pillows, scatter cushions and seat pads 	a , b and e	a and d
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cots, carry-cots, playpens, prams, push-chairs and other similar articles designed to contain a baby or small child 	a , b , e and f	a and d

1 BS 7177: 1989 contains specifications for labelling mattresses and bed-bases.

Information requirements at point of sale

Trading Standards Officers have powers to inspect products and related documents.

From 1 November 1988 **any person** who supplies new furniture (or loose covers or stretch covers) which carries **the shorter permanent label** must make available to an enforcement agency, on request, certain information about the furniture (or loose or stretch covers). This information, which should be readily available for inspection, concerns the following details:

- the name and the postal code of the address of the first supplier (i.e. manufacturer or importer)
- the date on which the article was manufactured or imported
- the description of all the filling materials included in the article; and
- the description of all the covering materials included in the article.

Certain articles do not require all of the above information to be provided. On the next page is a list of these articles together with the information which must be provided.

ARTICLE	RELEVANT ITEMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> loose covers and stretch covers for furniture (see page 12) 	a and d
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pillows, scatter cushions and seat pads 	a and c
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cots, carry-cots, playpens, prams, push-chairs and other similar articles designed to contain a baby or small child 	a , c and d

Retailers therefore need to ensure that the manufacturer or importer (or any intermediary supplier) provides the above details for supplies of furniture which carry the shorter label. This information could be included, for example, on the supplier's invoice to the retailer. Retailers must retain this information

Information requirements for manufacturers and importers

From 1 November 1988 manufacturers and importers of furniture (with minor **exceptions**) must make available to the enforcement agency, on request, information to show their products meet the requirements of the Regulations and how compliance has been assured.

This information includes:

- the results of any relevant test that has been carried out on the furniture or its components
- how these test results are related to particular pieces of furniture
- how any records are related to the information given on labels, batch numbers or marks appearing on the furniture

This information must be retained for a period of five years from the date on which the manufacturer or importer supplies the furniture to the retailer or wholesaler.

It is for manufacturers and importers to decide what adjustments to their present record-keeping system may be necessary to ensure that the materials used in the manufacture of particular batches of furniture are traceable. But BS 5750 on Quality Systems may be found helpful in devising a suitable record system.

The Regulations do not require this information to be provided for mattresses, bed-bases, pillows, scatter cushions, seat pads, and **loose** or **stretch** covers for furniture.

Enforcement

The Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Trading Standards promotes the 'home authority' principle whereby enforcement authorities accept the primary responsibility for suppliers whose principal place of business is in their area, offering advice and support on a regular basis. The principle, which is endorsed by trading standards departments throughout the country, aims to increase efficiency by minimising duplication and providing an effective means of preventing infringements rather than remedying them once they have occurred. Clearly it is in suppliers' own interests to discuss at an early stage with their home authority any problems they may have in applying the Regulations.

The tests

The tests are set out in Schedules 1 to 5 of the Regulations. They are based on BS 5852: Part 1 (1979)¹, BS 5852: Part 2 (1982) or BS 6807: (1986)².

The cigarette tests are carried out using a smouldering cigarette - Ignition Source (IS) 0. The match test is carried out using a small gas flame, IS 1, to simulate a burning match. IS 2 is a large gas flame. IS 5 is a wooden crib. These are all as specified in the Standards.

Tests for filling material

The Ignition Sources (IS) appropriate to foam fillings are IS 5 for foam in slab or cushion form, and IS 2 for foam in crumb form.

IS 2 is appropriate to all non-foam fillings.

Fillings are tested using the cover fabric specified in the Schedules to the Regulations (except the composite test for pillows).

Tests for upholstery

There are two types of cigarette tests for upholstery (i.e. the combination of the cover fabric and the filling material).

A full cigarette test is appropriate to visible ³ parts of the upholstery. If the upholstery uses a fire-retardant treatment, this test requires a water-wash procedure to be carried out on the cover fabric before a smouldering cigarette is placed on the upholstery.

A **modified** cigarette test is appropriate to the non-visible ³ parts of the upholstery. This test does not require any water-wash procedure.

Tests for cover fabric

There are two types of match tests for cover fabric.

A full match test is appropriate to visible ³ parts of the cover fabric. If the cover fabric uses a fire-retardant treatment this test requires a water-wash procedure to be carried out on the fabric prior to the ignition test. The Regulations require the visible parts of the cover fabric to be tested with standard polyurethane foam as the standard filling material for the purposes of this test.

A **modified** match test is appropriate to non-visible ³ parts of the cover fabric.

This test does not require any water-wash procedure. These parts of the cover fabric are tested with combustion-modified foam as the standard filling material for the purposes of this test.

Table of test requirements for different kinds of furniture and furnishings

ITEM	TEST DESCRIPTION	TEST REQUIREMENT
1) Domestic upholstered furniture including sofa-beds and other convertibles (except mattresses and bed-bases), nursery furniture (except baby nests), garden furniture and caravan furniture.	Cigarette resistance of visible parts of upholstery	The cigarette test of BS 5852: Part 1 as modified by Schedule 4, Part I of the Regulations. The test is applied to the actual composite used.
	Cigarette resistance of non-visible parts of upholstery	The cigarette test of BS 5852: Part 1 as modified by Schedule 4, Part II of the Regulations. The test is applied to the actual composite used.
	Foam fillings	
	Polyurethane foam in slab or cushion form	Ignition Source 5 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.
	Polyurethane foam in crumb form	Must be derived from above and meet Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations
	Latex rubber foam	Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.
	Non-foam fillings	
	Single fillings	Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.
	Composite fillings	Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.

		over foam specified in Schedule 5, Part I of the Regulations.
	<p>Match resistance test for all visible covers except stretch covers, scatter cushion covers and specified cover fabrics when used over specified interliner</p>	The match test of BS 5852: Part 1 over foam specified in Schedule 5, Part III of the Regulations.
2) Baby nests	<p>Match resistance test for non-visible covers</p> <p>Cigarette resistance of visible parts of upholstery</p> <p>Cigarette resistance of non-visible parts of upholstery</p> <p>Foam fillings</p> <p>Polyurethane foam in slab or cushion form</p> <p>Polyurethane foam in crumb form</p> <p>Latex rubber foam</p> <p>Non-foam fillings</p> <p>Single fillings</p> <p>Composite fillings</p>	<p>The cigarette test of BS 5852: Part 1 as modified by Schedule 4, Part I of the Regulations. The test is applied to the actual composite used.</p> <p>The cigarette test of BS 5852: Part 1 as modified by Schedule 4, Part II of the Regulations. The test is applied to the actual composite used.</p> <p>Ignition Scour 5 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p> <p>Must be derived from above and meet Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p> <p>Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p> <p>Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p>
3) Head-boards for beds	<p>Cigarette resistance of visible parts of upholstery</p> <p>Foam fillings</p> <p>Polyurethane foam in slab or cushion foam</p> <p>Polyurethane foam in crumb form</p> <p>Latex rubber foam</p> <p>Non-foam fillings</p>	<p>The cigarette test of BS 5852: Part 1 is modified by Schedule 4, Part I of the Regulations. The test is applied to the actual composite used.</p> <p>Ignition Source 5 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p> <p>Must be derived from above and meet Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p> <p>Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p> <p>Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.</p>

	Single fillings	1, Part I of the Regulations.
		Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the Regulations.
	Composite fillings	The match test of BS 5852: Part 1, over foam specified in Schedule 5, Part I of the Regulations.
	Match resistance test for all visible covers except stretch covers, scatter cushion covers and limited range of cover fabrics when used over specified interliners.	
4) Interliner	Test for interliner used with a limited range of fabrics (see pages 6-7)	Ignition Source 5 of BS 5852: Part 2 using cover fabric and foam filling specified in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.
5) Loose covers	Match test for loose covers	The match test of BS 5852: Part 1 over foam specified in Schedule 5, Part I of the Regulations.
6) Stretch covers	Match test for stretch covers	The match test of BS 5852: Part 1 over foam specified in Schedule 5, Part II of the Regulations.
		No requirement for any cigarette test for loose or stretch covers.
7) Mattresses and bed-bases	Fillings	
	(1) Foam fillings	As for Item 1 above.
	(2) Non-foam fillings:	
	Single fillings	As for Item 1 above.
	Composite fillings	Ignition Source 2 (of BS 5852: Part 2) using BS 6807 as method of test
8) Pillows	Fillings	
	(1) Foam fillings	As for Item 1 above.
	(2) Non-foam fillings:	
	either	
	Single fillings test	As for Item 1 above.
	or	
	Fillings tested with the primary cover as a composite	Ignition Source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2.
		No requirement for any cigarette or match test.
9) Scatter cushions and seat pads	Fillings	
	(1) Foam fillings	As for Item 1 above
	(2) Non-foam fillings:	
	either	
	Single fillings test	As for Item 1 above.
	or	
	Fillings tested with the primary cover as a composite	Ignition source 2 of BS 5852: Part 2 using the cover specified in Schedule 1, Part I of the

Regulations.

No requirement for any cigarette or match test.

1 *The application of clauses 9.3.4 and 9.3.5 in BS 5852: Part 1: 1979, in relation to progressive smouldering, has been clarified by the British Standards Institution Committee responsible for the development of this standard (CCM/44) in that it is necessary to observe test specimens for a period of 15 minutes from the removal of the gas flame in order to determine whether or not the specimen is smouldering progressively.*

2 *British Standards are published by the British Standards Institution and may be obtained from BSI, Sales Department, Linford Wood, Milton Keynes MK14 6LE.*

3 *The meaning of visible and non-visible parts of upholstery and cover fabric is given on page 8.*