

IKEA FAQ

FLAME

RETARDANTS



What is a flame retardant?

A flame retardant is a treatment, chemical or other, which makes materials/products inherently less prone to ignite. If a product treated with a flame retardant should ignite, it burns at a slower pace and/or inhibits the progress of the fire. However, flame retardant chemicals aren't the only way to improve fire safety. Fire barriers can also be used to provide fire proof products.

Does IKEA use flame retardants?

The IKEA approach to chemicals is to only add them if necessary. IKEA strives to totally refrain from the use of chemical flame retardants in the products and instead use techniques and materials with flame retardant properties e.g. wool. However, in some countries, chemical flame retardants are needed in specific products in order to pass a local legal requirement. The products treated with chemical flame retardants need to fulfil strict emission requirements as well for all flame retardants added to the product.

Chemicals are not the only way to improve fire safety. For instance, IKEA has developed a solution based on an interlinear that provides fire proof products. By further investing in innovations and product development we are convinced that we can increase fire safety in our products, without using unwanted chemicals.

Why does IKEA use flame retardants in some countries but not in others?

In some countries, chemical flame retardants are needed in specific products in order to pass a local legal requirement.

In which countries and in which products does IKEA use flame retardants?

- **In US:** Mattresses/mattresses sets have a fibre fire barrier made of rayon/polyester batting with an inherently fire-resistant property. Flame retardant chemicals (non-halogenated phosphorous-based inorganic salts) are only used for some stitch bonds, piping and zippers on spring mattresses in the US.
- **In UK and Ireland:** Mattresses and upholstered furniture contain flame retardant chemicals. This is needed for passing the UK legal requirements where each material in the mattress shall be tested separately.
- **Tents, play tunnels and other products you can enter:** Flame retardants (non-halogenated) are applied on the fabric to meet the legal requirements for tents in a few countries.
- **Electrical and electronic products:** Flame retardants are used in electrical and electronic products globally in order to comply with applicable flammability requirements.

What are brominated flame retardants and what are the risks?

Brominated flame retardants are based on bromine compounds and are associated with health risks such as cancer and hormone disruptive activity. They can also have a negative impact on fertility and there are indications that some of the brominated flame retardants may influence brain function in children. Further, brominated flame retardants can form highly toxic substances (dioxins, benzofurans) if burned under uncontrolled conditions.

Does IKEA use brominated flame retardants?

All brominated flame retardants were phased out from IKEA furniture production in 2000.

Can IKEA guarantee that the products fulfil the fire protection requirements?

All IKEA products are tested and approved according to current regulations and standards. Fire protection is built in already from the start; by choosing the right material for the product, by the design and by performing verification tests of the products.

I'm worried, what shall I do?

There is no need to worry. Customers should always feel confident that products bought at IKEA are safe and healthy to use. IKEA products must not contain any harmful chemical substances. They shall fulfil all legal requirements, but they shall also fulfil, or even exceed, customer expectations. Whenever possible, IKEA takes the strictest existing legal requirements and applies them globally on all products on all our sales markets.

IKEA works precautionary and has phased out several chemicals that could potentially be harmful, often ahead of legislation.

