

# SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

## FIRE SAFETY ADVICE SHEET

### **FLAME RETARDENT MATERIALS**

#### **NON-DOMESTIC PREMISES**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

Whether for reasons of satisfying the conditions of a licence or registration (i.e. the Licensing Act 2003/Care Standards Act 2000), or following a fire risk assessment carried out under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, it is often necessary to ensure that certain materials used in scenery curtains, drapes, furniture and furnishings etc have good flame retardant properties. Some of these materials may be inherently flame retardant or specially treated during the manufacturing process to render them flame retardant

Furniture and furnishings may significantly increase fire spread in rooms and those circulation spaces, corridors and stairway enclosures that form the means of escape from buildings. The potential impact on fire safety and means of escape arrangements should be taken into consideration when providing, arranging or positioning furniture and furnishings.

Listed below are some examples and brief details of various items that should be fire retardant.

#### **UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE**

British Standard 7176:1991 specifies the resistance to ignition for non-domestic seating. The standard divides seating into four hazard classifications; Low, Medium, High and Very High dependent on the location where the furniture will be used, e.g. only High Hazard tested furniture can be used in High Hazard premises.

The hazard classifications are as follows:-

- Low                      Offices, Schools, Museums, Day Centres
- Medium                 Hotel bedrooms, Restaurants, Places of Public Entertainment, Public Buildings, Public Houses, Hospitals, Hostels
- High                     Sleeping accommodation in special hospital wards and hostels, off shore installations.
- Very High              Prisons

#### **BEDCOVERS AND PILLOWS**

British Standard 7175:1989 specifies the methods of test for ignitability for bed covers and pillows

## **CURTAINS, DRAPES AND WINDOW BLINDS**

British Standard 5867: Part 2 1980 specifies the flammability requirements for curtains, drapes and window blinds.

The standard is divided into three performance groups; Type A, Type B and Type C.

Listed below are classes of premises together with the performance type that is required for that use:-

- |                                  |        |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| • Places of public entertainment | Type B |
| • Residential Care Homes         | Type B |
| • Nursing Home                   | Type B |
| • Hotel                          | Type B |

All fabrics that meet the requirements of BS 5867 should be provided with the following information in the purchase contract.

1. Manufacturers name and trademark
2. A statement that it complies with BS 5867: Part 2, adding Type A,B or C as appropriate
3. Instructions on special precautions concerning care of the material, including cleaning

## **ARTIFICIAL PLANTS AND FLOWERS**

The use of artificial plants and flowers can present a hazard of rapid fire spread and smoke generation. These decorations are usually made of polyester silk and/or man made fibres on plastic stems and treatment to render them flame retardant is necessary unless, when bought, a certificate of their flame retardancy is obtained.

These decorations can be treated but it should be borne in mind that the effects of such treatment are not permanent and can rapidly be diminished by

- Persons brushing against them
- Constant handling to see if they are real
- Cleaning with water and
- The settling of dust on leaves and flowers

In licensed premises, a certificate, issued by a specialist manufacturer/contractor should be provided stating that all decorative plants have been treated and maintained treated with suitable fire retardant and this certificate should be renewable annually.

## **SUPPLIERS OF FLAME RETARDANT TREATMENTS**

Companies offering flame retardant treatments can be found on the internet and in the Yellow Pages telephone directory.

For general fire safety matters, Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service can be reached on **01743 260260** or via our web site at **[www.shropshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk)**