

# SAFETY SENSE

## New Materials Make Airline Seats Lighter, Safer

(NAPSA)—For most airline passengers, buying a ticket on an airplane leads to a number of questions: Will I be sitting on an aisle or in a window seat? Will there be a movie or other in-flight entertainment (IFE)? What food or drinks will be served?

One question that doesn't immediately pop to mind is, "What is my seat made from?" And while it's unlikely that passengers are going to start checking their cushions and seat covers, seat components actually play an important role in both safety and cost, as well as a person's comfort during the flight.

Manufacturers are increasingly looking to reduce the weight of airplane seats, thus reducing the overall weight of the aircraft. This would lead to lower fuel costs and faster travel times, savings that may ultimately be reflected in ticket prices. In addition, weight savings gained will partially offset weight increases from IFE and other features geared toward making flights more enjoyable for passengers.

Aircraft passenger seats can be reduced in weight by implementing seat cushions manufactured from advanced materials. Graphite composite fire-hard foams constitute the latest development in fire-resisting PUR (polyurethane) foam systems, including special flame-resistant substances. No fire-blocking layer



**New lighter seat cushion materials are fire resistant and help make air travel more efficient.**

is required to meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations; fire resistance applies to the entire foam, not only the outer surface.

These flame-resistant cushions help protect passengers in the case of a cabin fire or other problem. The cushions are produced either by the injection of foam into molds or by cutting foam blocks into the appropriate shapes. Either way, the cushions serve as a key safety barrier in emergency situations.

Before these materials are used in commercial aircraft, however, the FAA requires that they be subjected to rigorous fire tests. Not only are cushions and seat covers tested for fire resistance, but also for chemical content, weight, performance and—good news for passengers—comfort.

To learn more about aircraft seating and safety, visit the FAA Web site at [www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov).