

SAFETY SENSE

New Mattresses Resist Flames During A Home Fire



(NAPSA)—Since 1980, the number of home fires that started when mattresses were exposed to fire has decreased by nearly 65 percent, mostly due to the mattress industry, its suppliers and regulators teaming up to make mattresses that resisted cigarette burns in the early 1970s. Now, the three are working together again to decrease that number even more with a new regulation and mattresses that resist open flames.

New Regulation Helps

The new regulation, passed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), requires all mattresses made on or after July 1, 2007, to pass an open-flame test that simulates typical conditions during a home fire, such as bed sheets that are ignited from a candle on a bedside table.

Sealy, the world's largest bedding manufacturer, worked with the industry and CPSC regulators to formulate the new flammability standard. The company has invested millions of dollars in research and development to create new technologies that make its beds even more flame resistant.

"We were proud to move early to flame resistant products well ahead of the July 1 regulation because it was the right thing to do," said Mike Murray, vice president and legal counsel for Sealy.

"Sealy is the only bedding manufacturer that built its own, on-site Flame Resistant Test Center. We also worked with suppliers to create our FlameGuard protection, a non-toxic, chemical-free solution that prevents flames from spreading on our mattresses."

Compliance To New Open-Flame Testing

Though the new regulation requires that all mattresses made on or after July 1 comply with the new open-flame testing, that doesn't mean that non-flame resistant mattresses will be immediately taken out of retail stores. Many mattresses in local retail outlets may not comply with the new standard for several months after July 1 if they were manufactured before July.

"Consumers shopping for a new mattress should seek out one that meets the new standard because it's another important safeguard that can help protect their families," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of communications for the National Fire Protection Association. "It should be part of your family's overall fire safety plan, along with important items like working smoke alarms and a home fire escape plan. Families also should consider home fire sprinklers."

Consumers can ensure their new mattresses comply with the

flammability standard by reading the law tag, which should state that the bed meets the requirements of 16 CFR Part 1633, the official name for the new standard.

In addition to purchasing a flame resistant mattress, there are several things you can do to help protect yourself and your home from fire. The U.S. Fire Administration offers these tips to reduce home fires:

Tips To Reduce Home Fires

- Do not smoke in bed.
- Place heaters at least 3 feet from the bed.
- Keep lit candles away from bedding, curtains and papers.
- Do not run electrical cords under your bed or trap them against a wall where heat can build up.
- Use only UL-approved electric blankets and warmers.

According to Dr. Alan Letton, vice president of research and technology innovation at Sealy, the entire process to make mattresses more flame resistant was a significant undertaking and investment for Sealy.

"Everyone here is excited to offer new technologies and innovations that enhance the lives of our consumers," Letton said. "It's one more way we help you sleep soundly each night."