



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

**FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS
(FIRE) (SAFETY) REGULATIONS
1988**

**Consultation on proposed
amendments to Schedule 5 - the
Match Test - Part 1 and Schedule 4
- the Cigarette Test**

AUGUST 2014

**Annex 8: Proposed amendments to schedule 5 - the match test -
part 1 and schedule 4 - the cigarette test - of the furniture and
furnishings (fire) (safety) regulations 1988 - response form**

The Department may, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, make available, on public request, individual responses.

The closing date for this consultation is 7th October 2014.

Please provide answers to any of the questions below, and provide any additional response you believe is appropriate, headed:

Your name:

Redacted

Organisation (if applicable): Westbridge Furniture Designs Ltd

Address: Greenfield Business Park, Bagillt Road, Holywell, Flintshire CH8 7FF

Please return completed forms to:

Terry Edge

4th Floor, Orchard 1

BIS

1 Victoria Street

London SW1 0ET

Telephone: 020 7215 5576

email: terry.edge@bis.gsi.gov.uk

Please tick boxes below which best describe you or your organisation.

	Organisation type
	Business representative organisation/trade body
	Central government
	Charity or social enterprise
	Individual
X	Large business (over 250 staff)
	Legal representative
	Local Government
	Medium business (50 to 250 staff)
	Micro business (up to 9 staff)
	Small business (10 to 49 staff)
	Trade union or staff association
	Other (please describe):

Please note: in addition to the consultation questions below, we would be very grateful if you could also answer the questions from the Impact Assessment which follow them.

Consultation questions:

Question 1: Do you think this proposal will achieve its aims of: helping to make UK furniture greener, save money to industry and making UK furniture more fire safe?

Comments:

Questions 2: Do you think that paragraphs 19-22 accurately set out the need for a change to the current match test?

A ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments:

Question 3: Do you think the proposed changes are viable (paragraphs 23-29)?

A

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Comments:

Question 4: What are your views on the inclusion of currently unregulated materials (paragraphs 27-29)?

Comments:

Question 5: Do you agree with the benefits BIS believes the changes will bring?

A ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments:

Question 6: What is your view on BIS's reasons for bringing forward the changes (paragraphs 41-42)?

Comments:

Question 7: General rating of the proposals.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest, grade your overall approval of the proposals

	5	4	3	2	1
Right problems identified					
Range of options wide enough					
Preferred options well chosen					

Question 8: Do you have any other comments that might aid the consultation process as a whole?

Comments:

Below are the additional questions from the Impact Assessment. Please respond to them on this part of the form.

Q1: Is the assumption on the cost of testing above right in your view? Could you provide evidence supporting your arguments?

Q2: Do you have any evidence that could help to refine this cost estimates?

Q3: Are there any other costs not included here that should be included? Please provide evidence supporting your arguments.

On the presumption that products manufactured in compliance with the current FFR, will not comply with the new FFR; after Oct 2016, what will the legal position be on the re-sale of customer returns, manufactured in compliance with the current FFR? For manufacturers and retailers, who accept returns from customers after a number of years use, the cost implications of not being able to sell on returns with residual value, are very significant. If we were unable to sell these on, (or to pass on nil value returns to charities), then there would also be an adverse environmental impact, in sending such products to landfill.

As an upholstery manufacturer, we are contractually obliged to accept faulty returns, up to 1, 2, or 5 years, after the manufacturing date, depending on the particular retailer's policy.

There are various reasons for return, it may be to do with normal wear and tear, e.g. seat softening, fabric soiling, or a genuine manufacturing fault, e.g. a seam splitting in use after some years. In these cases the customer will have been provided with a replacement product.

Nearly all returns will have some residual value, depending on severity of the issue and may need to be repaired before re-sale. There is a sizeable market for these products and there is a network of 'jobbers' in the UK, specialising in clearing these returns, through 'factory outlet' shops. It is the jobbers who will make any repairs. Typically returns will attract around 20 - 25% of their full retail value, for the manufacturers.

In a limited number of cases, returns will have suffered misuse and maybe heavily soiled, or require significant repair. These returns are uneconomical to repair and so in the case of Westbridge, we will pass these on to local charities, free of charge, (I can't vouch for the industry on this category). The charities we work with are set up with workshops, to provide skills to people with learning difficulties, or ex-offenders. They then strip and re-build the returns for sale, to generate revenue for their organisations.

There is a significant rate of aged return within the industry and this is driven by retailer policy, i.e. authorising a full replacement product, rather than insisting on a repair, or replacement part, as a remedy.

Of course, this concern also has relevance to the wider second-hand furniture market. Also for furniture in self-catering accommodation – will owners be required to replace their 'old' furniture and if so, will it all have to go to landfill?

Q4: Do you agree with the assumption that there will be minimal losses of stock given the transition period? What is your normal turnover of stock?

Q5: Do you agree with the assumption on annual cost savings to UK based companies testing of fabrics for the cigarette test? Could you provide information on the cost of the cigarette testing for your company?

Q6: Do you agree with the range of cost savings above? What are the cost savings most likely to be for your company?

Q7: Are there any other methodologies you think would be more appropriate?

Q8: Do you agree with the cost estimates above? Could you provide alternative estimates?
Could you provide estimates of cost savings for upholstered garden furniture and/or caravan upholstered furniture?

Q9: Do you agree with the assumptions above towards calculating the total annual amount of treated fabric? Please provide evidence supporting your arguments.

Q10: Are there any other unquantified costs or benefits? If possible, please provide evidence supporting your arguments.

Q11: Is this a fair reflection of how smaller businesses will be affected? Please provide evidence supporting your arguments.

Q12: Are the familiarisation cost savings, in time, between options 2 and 4 an accurate reflection of the difference? Please provide evidence supporting your arguments.

Q13: Do the cost saving time profiles accurately reflect the timings of cost savings your business expect to see?

Thank you for your views on this consultation. Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X ☐

At BIS we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be okay if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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