2016-D25 CFOA - Fire Engineering and Technical Standards Group

Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Consultation on updating the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations (FFRs) response form

The consultation is available at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/furniture-and-furnishing-fire-safety-regulations-proposed-changes-2016

The closing date for responses is **11 November 2016**.

The form can be submitted by email to: furniture.consultation2016@bis.gsi.gov.uk or submitted by letter to:

Christine Knox
Regulatory Delivery
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Second Floor
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Please be aware that we intend to publish all responses to this consultation.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or release to other parties or to disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes. Please see the section on confidentiality and data protection on page 7 of the consultation for further information.

If you want information, including personal data, that you provide to be treated in confidence, please explain to us what information you would like to be treated as confidential and why you regard the information as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

I want my response to be treated as confidential ☐

Comments:

Questions

Name: **Fire Engineering and Technical Standards Group**
Organisation (if applicable): **Chief Fire Officers Association**
Address: **c/o Fire Engineering Dept, Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service, 146 Bolton Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 8US.**

	Respondent type
☐	Business representative organisation/trade body
☐	Central government
☐	Charity or social enterprise
☐	Individual
☐	Test House
☐	Manufacturer
☐	Retailer
☐	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) Industry Stakeholder; Emergency Services representative.

Questions on scope

Q1 Do you agree with the revised definition of the Regulation's scope?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: A campaign to educate stakeholders about the aims of the regulations and what items are included would help to improve the understanding and awareness of the end-users.

Q2 Do you agree with the proposals relating to sleeping bags and mattress protectors (i.e. those which can be put in a washing machine are explicitly removed from scope and do not have to meet the requirements of the regulations)?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: See note above.

Q3 Do you agree with the proposals relating to cushions and seat pads (i.e. that they remain excluded from cover tests but the definition of these products to be specified more clearly)?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: As one of the most likely fuel sources in proximity to a probable ignition point, more action to improve the safety standard of these products should be included.

Q4 Do you agree with the proposals relating to outdoor furniture (i.e. that outdoor furniture unsuitable for use inside the home, and clearly labelled as not complying with the Regulations) should be out of scope?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: This could provide an avenue to bypass these regulations and should be avoided if possible.

Q5 Do you agree with the proposals relating to baby products (i.e. that items covered by covered by BS EN1888 (wheeled child conveyances) and BS

EN1466 (carry cots and stands) are removed from scope, with padded playpens treated in the same way as mattresses)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: The assumption that baby products do not represent a fire risk could be a misapprehension, when they may realistically be easily involved in a fire and are a not insignificant fire load (especially considering the contents typically contained within). Furthermore, to exclude these products from proposals which try and reduce the use of possibly harmful chemicals, seems shortsighted.

Q6 Do you agree with the proposed treatment of second-hand products (i.e. that they would be required to bear the relevant permanent label)?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: Again, an education programme to inform stakeholders of the purpose and benefits of such a label would support the aims of this project.

Questions on testing

Q7 Do you agree to removing the Filling 1 option?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: The proposed testing methods do not seem to be substantiated with evidence of practical tests supporting these proposals. A more widely publicised regime of testing methods involving stakeholders may help to establish the effectiveness of the different options.

Q8 Do you agree that the specifications set out in the draft Regulations for the test foam and fibre wrap are sufficient to achieve the objectives of the Regulations?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: See above.

Q9a Do you agree that the regulations should provide a protective cover option?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: Flexibility for the industry is understandably required; could the safety methods employed for each product be included on the proposed label?

Q9b If yes, do you agree with our proposed definition of protectiveness?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: See Q7.

Q10 Do you agree with the proposed requirements for components close to the cover?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: Is there an easy to interpret definition of 'close to the cover'?

Q11 Do you agree that there is no need for the cigarette test for covers that pass the revised match test?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: Cigarettes and matches are a very different ignition hazard and should be treated individually.

For business respondents:

Q12 Which of the routes to compliance do you expect to follow for most of your products?

☐ Schedule 3 interliner ☐ Protective cover

☐ Non-protective cover + compliant components ☐ Not sure

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Q13a What do you expect the impact of the testing proposals to be on your use of flame retardants in covers?

☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ No change ☐ Not sure

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Q13b What do you expect the impact of the testing proposals to be on your overall use of flame retardants?

☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ No change ☐ Not sure

Comments: Click here to enter text.

Questions on traceability and enforcement

Q14 Do you agree with the product record/technical file requirements for manufacturers and importers?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: Could this information be accessible to the wider public? Is the proposal realistically practical?

Q15a Do you agree with the requirements for the single permanent label, and the proposal to remove the requirement for additional display labels?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: As included previously; some sort of education campaign would be helpful which could eventually filter down understanding to the end-user/general public.

Q15b What do you think is the most effective means of conveying the use of flame retardants in the cover of this product eg by text, symbol?

Comments: Some sort of symbol and text marking system, similar to the identification markings on shoes. Clarifying where chemicals, barriers or other techniques have been utilised for the product to meet the safety standards required.

Other questions on the proposals

Q16 Do you agree that a 24 month transition period is sufficient, and that the changes should be reviewed in five years?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: No specialist knowledge in this field.

Q17 Do you have any other comments on the proposals or draft regulations?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Comments: Overall the fire service agrees that a review of the regulations are overdue. The industry and society has altered greatly since the last iteration of the regulations were introduced. However the research on which these proposals is based seems incomplete. The match test and cigarette test may assess the risk from specific ignition sources, but not from ignition caused by fire spread from other fuel sources already burning. An examination of the hazards presented by fire retardant chemicals during long term exposure (normal use) and acute exposure (during combustion) would help to focus the aims of the proposals. Inclusion of the attendance and performance of the fire service and how intervention may be affected in the coming years would also help to ensure that the regulations stay effective for longer. The 5 year review period is quite lengthy. Would there be the possibility to monitor the impact throughout that period and bring forward the review date, or make interim adjustments if necessary?

Questions on the Impact Assessment

Q18 Do you agree with our estimate of traceability time in the Impact Assessment – ie one-off input of 16 hours per firm and ongoing per year time of 48 hours per firm? If not can you provide additional evidence to support your answer?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: This is a fire service/CFOA response, a comment on these questions would not be relevant.

Q19 How much do you estimate you would save per year from the removal of the cigarette test?

Amount saved: See Q18.

☐ Nothing ☒ Not sure

Q20 How much do you estimate you would save per year from reduced use of flame retardants?

Amount saved: See Q18.

☐ Nothing ☒ Not sure

Q21 Are you aware of any further costs or benefits we have not identified in the impact assessment? Please support with any evidence you have.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not sure

Comments: See Q18. However a further comment: would an education programme if it were possible, be funded or supported at various levels from industry stakeholders?

Q22 To what extent do you agree that, overall, these proposals represent a reasonable compromise – bearing in mind the information in this consultation document, feedback on the previous (2014) consultation, and other stakeholder input during the review?

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☒ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

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 ☐

At BEIS 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