2016 - 059

Response ID ANON-F7WP-2993-U

Submitted to **Furniture and furnishings fire safety regulations: proposed changes (2016)**
Submitted on **2016-11-07 15:02:36**

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:
[redacted]

2 What is your email address?

Email:
[redacted]

Yes

3 What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Herman Miller

4 How would you classify your organisation?

Organisation type:
Manufacturer

Other - please describe here:

Scope

5 The proposed regulations cover any item of domestic furniture which is ordinarily intended for private use in a dwelling and comprises a cover fabric and a filling.Do you agree with the revised definition of the Regulation's scope?

Yes

Comment box:

6 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)?

No

Comment box:
We were unaware that sleeping bags were in the scope of the regulations.

7 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)?

Not sure

Comment box:
We agree that a better definition of scatter cushions and seat pads is a good idea. We would suggest, however that product has moved on and that rather than have two different sizes, both scatter cushions and seat pads are classed as less than 60cm x 60 cm x nominal thickness (which should be less than 60 cm).

8 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?

Not sure

Comment box:
We agree that the definition of outdoor furniture needs to be improved. Is it clear that the only items that are excluded are those not suitable for use in a dwelling which must also be marked as such. It could be interpreted that even if a product was suitable for use in a dwelling it could be excluded if it was marked 'For outdoor use only', which would be a step back in safety.

9 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

Comment box:
We believe this is a positive step and we also agree for the exclusion of children's car seats as noted in the draft regulations, but not in the consultation document.

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

No

Comment box:
Unworkable for second hand goods, particularly re upholstery.

Testing

11 Do you agree to removing the Filling 1 option? (i.e. to remove the option to test where covers are placed directly over the foam filling in the final product)

Yes

Comment box:

12 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?

No

Comment box:
Not specific enough on fiber wrap, how is it applied, what tension etc

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

Yes

Comment box:

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

No

Comment box:
The 2 mm diameter hole will be difficult to measure, and there is no tolerance. Many cover fabrics (predominately that contain man-made fiber) currently satisfy the current protective test can split by more than 2 mm diameter, but will now be non-protective. Also when the flame is applied the split tends to be a line, not a hole. It is expected that this test will cause a lot of variation in use. Also it is noted that in the draft regulations the test has to be made 5 times (10 applications of the flame) and pass 4 times. This will be very expensive as it will require 5 times the test materials and 5 times the cost of test. This does not seem to have been accounted for in the impact assessment. It is noted from the Technical Panel documents none of the assembled experts supported this definition of protectiveness. This may lead to an increased use of fire retardants for
compliance. A better test is the current test over a non-combustion modified foam, which for all its faults is very clear and simple to understand when a fabric is compliant.

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

Not sure

Comment box:
In its current form in the draft regulations it could be a difficult route to follow as it adds significant layers of due diligence to ensure all components are compliant. This may have been easier to introduce with an exclusion list, as originally proposed. Whilst fire safety is of prime importance, this may drive up cost. Also the test is not well defined and does not explain how small or shaped components should be tested. Should some small components be excluded, for example, due to their lower fire risk?

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

Yes

Comment box:

17 For business respondents - Which of the routes to compliance do you expect to follow for most of your products?

Not sure

Comment box:
This depends entirely on the product on a case by case basis, depending on fabric choice and clients requirements.

18 For business respondents - What do you expect the impact of the testing proposals to be on your use of flame retardants in covers?

Not sure

Comment box:
It is an unknown, there are concerns that the protective cover route may actually drive up flame retardant usage.

19 For business respondents - What do you expect the impact of the testing proposals to be on your overall use of flame retardants?

Increase

Comment box:
It is expected that the use of flame retardants overall may increase, whether that is with protective covers, increased interliner usage or modifying the components close to the cover.

Traceability and enforcement

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

Yes

Comment box:

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

Yes

Comment box:

22 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?

Comment box:
Text would be the best method. However is this requirement slightly misleading as flame retardants would be used on interliners, in some fillings and some items close to the cover.

Other questions

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

Yes

Comment box:

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

Comment box:

Impact Assessment

25 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?

No

Comment box:
When the flammability regulations were changed in the US this took a minimum of 24 hours work per product as a one off and an on going per year time of at least that again per product.

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

Amount saved::

Nothing

Comment box:
Due to the increased testing required we are sure that this will cost us more per product than previously.

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

Amount saved::

Nothing

Comment box:
As noted we would probably need to increase our use of flame retardants in order to meet the new requirements.

28 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

Comment box:
Carrying out the match test 5 times will cost 5 times as much. 5 tests on 5 material samples with all of the set up and test time involved.

29 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?

Not sure

Comment box: