

BIFMA International

The Flame Retardant Dilemma: Business and Institutional Furniture Industry Perspective

February 10, 2012

Agenda

BIFMA Overview

Sustainability

Flammability

BIFMA International

- Founded in 1973
- 240 members are producers, suppliers, and other service providers of office and institutional furniture
- Develops voluntary product and industry standards



- Advocates for legislation and government regulation of the industry
- Publishes key industry statistics

BIFMA International

We develop voluntary product and industry standards that support safe, healthy and sustainable environments; publish key industry statistics; advocate for legislation and government regulation that have a direct impact on the health of the industry; and facilitate meaningful dialog and education to support our core services and the industry we serve.

SUSTAINABILITY

ANSI/BIFMA e3-2011e

Furniture Sustainability Standard

(patterned after LEED – multiple criteria)



the BIFMA sustainability standard

Materials

Energy & Atmosphere

Human & Ecosystem Health

Social Responsibility

level

Sectional Review - Materials

prerequisite - design for the environment

climate neutral materials

life cycle assessment

efficient use of materials

rapidly renewable materials

bio-based renewable materials

recycled content

recycled & biodegradable materials

extended product responsibility

solid waste management

water management



the BIFMA sustainability standard

level

Sectional Review - Energy & Atmosphere

Prerequisite - energy policy
building energy performance baseline
building energy performance rating
LEED certified facility
embodied energy
finished product energy consumption
transportation
on-site and off-site renewable energy
greenhouse gases



the BIFMA sustainability standard

level

Sectional Review - Human and Ecosystem
Health

prerequisites - compliance and policies

ISO 14001 or equivalent

chemical management plan - facility

product, process and maintenance chemicals

reduction/elimination of chemicals of concern

low emitting furniture



the BIFMA sustainability standard



Sectional Review - Social Responsibility

prerequisites - health/safety management
and labor/human rights
policy on social responsibility
external health and safety management
inclusiveness
community outreach and involvement
social responsibility and reporting
supply chain



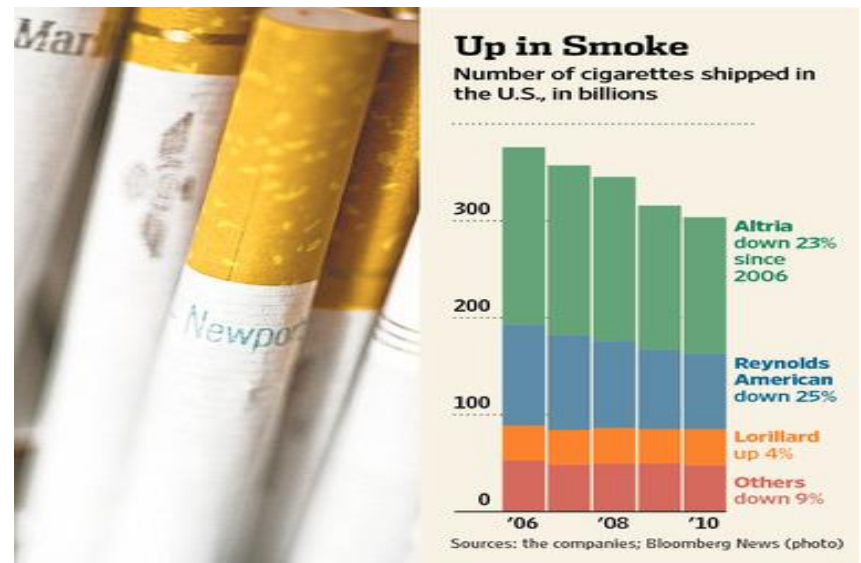
the BIFMA sustainability standard



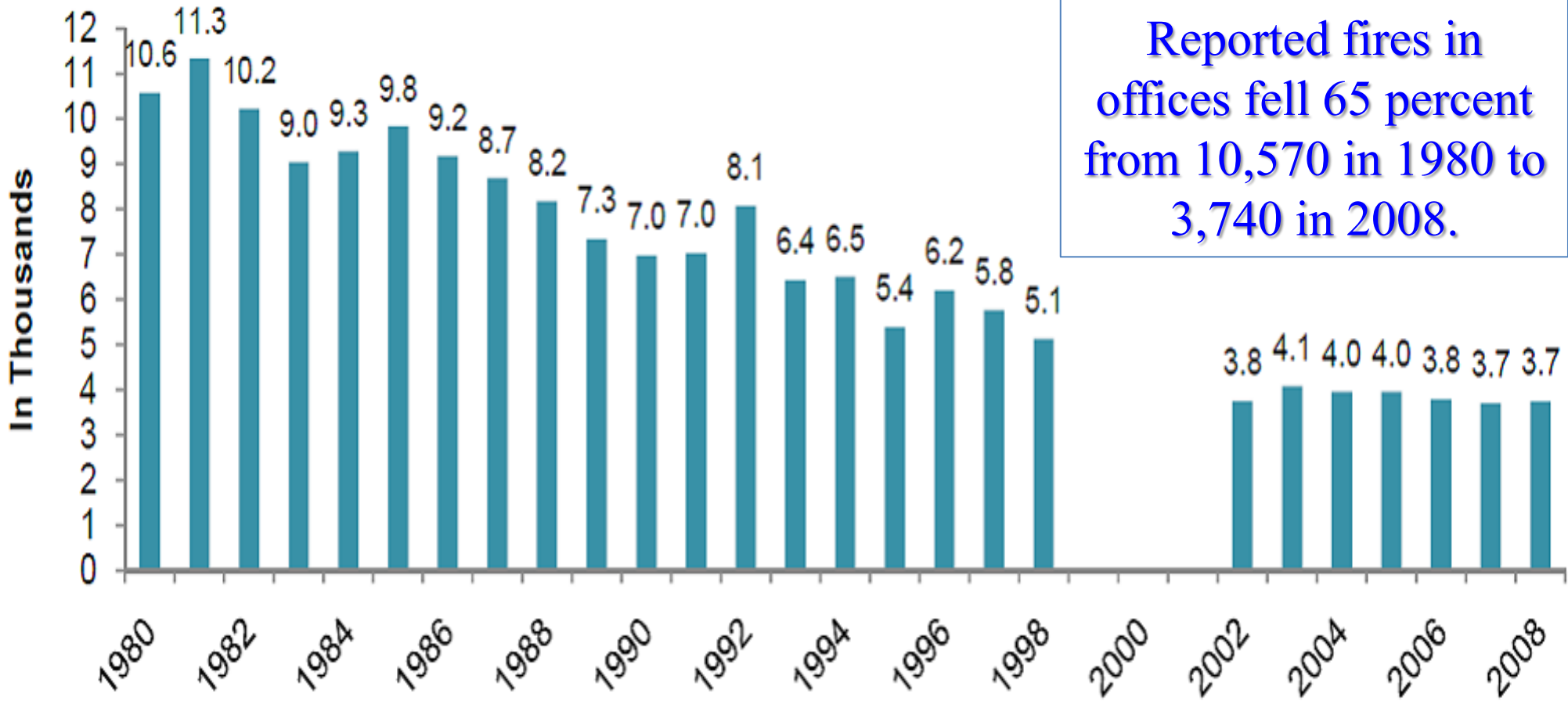
Flammability

Fire Statistics - Smoking

- Smoking-related fires have fallen 66% from 1980 to 2008 (Source – NFPA Journal – Nov/Dec 2010)
 - Fewer people smoking.
 - Bans on smoking.
 - Technology – detectors...
 - “Fire-safe” cigarette legislation.



**Figure 1. Reported Structure Fires in Office Properties
by Year 1980-2008**



Source: NFIRS and NFPA survey. See note for Table 1.

Fire Statistics

- In offices, no fires, deaths or injuries are attributed to upholstered furniture as the area of origin.
 - NFPA 2009 report *U.S. Structural Fires in Non-Residential Properties*

Traditional Fire Safety

- The American Chemistry Council, an industry group, says flame retardants play an important role in keeping people safe.
- Each year, about 7,630 home fires begin in upholstered furniture, taking 600 lives, says council spokeswoman Kathryn St. John. “Most experts recognize (the chemicals) are needed to fight fires, slow their spread and allow for early intervention to save lives.”

(Source: USA Today – May 5, 2011)

Environmental Safety

- Because of strict fire-safety standards in California; Americans have 10 times more of the chemicals in their bodies than people in the European Union, which has banned the most common types of chemical flame retardants, says Linda Birnbaum, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.
- Recently, California exempted certain baby products – strollers, infant carriers and nursing pillows – from those fire standards.

(Source: USA Today – May 5, 2011)

Our Customers

- Leading-edge clients are asking manufacturers to not use Fire Retardant Chemicals of Concern. This is in line with recent proposed Bills in California to reduce the use of Fire Retardant Chemicals of Concern.

BIFMA Involvement

- 1990s – BIFMA Partnered with CPSC for Uniform Flammability Law (still in process).
- December 2003 – BIFMA works with EPA (and AFMA) to find an alternative to pentabromodiphenyl ether. Penta was banned a year later.
- July 2006 – BIFMA joins Coalition for Fire-Safe Cigarettes. A requirement in all 50 states as of 2010. (Europe and Canada also requires FSC).
- October 2010 – EPA begins Partnership of Flame Retardant Alternatives for decabromodiphenyl ether (with BIFMA and many other industries).
- January 2012 – Flame Retardant Chemicals of Concern discussed at the BIFMA Leadership Conference. Members share a significant concern and desire to know more facts regarding this concern.

Summary

- Fire statistics are becoming more favorable and the office environment is considered safe with respect to fire danger.
- Office Furniture customers are requesting furniture without flame retardants. Manufacturers need flame retardants to comply with regulations (such as California TB-117 and TB-133). This is an issue!
- BIFMA seeks to understand the facts concerning fire safety versus environmental safety regarding Flame Retardant Chemicals of Concern.

Thank You

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