



Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut

January 2015

Volume 4, Number 1

In This Issue:

- What we're up to in 2015!
- Pushing the market!
- Working with state leaders
- Legislative action
- In the news

Working To Protect Health

We've been busy! We're working on a 3 major initiatives to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals and protect health!

Pushing the Market—and winning! We've teamed up with our national partners to urge the top 10 major retailers to "Mind the Store" by working with their suppliers to move away from using toxic chemicals in products they sell. These retailers include Walmart, Target, CVS, Walgreens, Kroger, Safeway, Lowes and Ashley Furniture. As a result of our work, Walmart and Target have indicated that they are moving in this direction! And on Friday, January 23rd, Ashley Furniture, the largest manufacturer and retailer of furniture in the country, announced that it would move away from using toxic chemical flame retardants in their products!



We will continue to work with these major retailers to urge them to MIND THE STORE!

Urging CT to purchase toxic-free products! We're working with our agency colleagues and members of the Executive branch on creative ways that the state can take the lead by requiring that certain product categories purchased for the state are toxic free. Examples include flame-retardant free furniture! These types of initiatives not only reduce exposure to state employees but support broad-based policies for all CT citizens!

Legislative action: The CT General Assembly is back in session and has already introduced our bill to provide CT citizens with science based information on the chemicals of concern and to require the Dept of Public Health to make recommendations on ways to reduce exposure (like bans, labeling etc) to the Legislature every two years for action. The bill is ***House Bill 5653 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children.***



IN THE NEWS:

We're thrilled to be on WTNH recently to talk about our work. Missed it? Check it out here: <http://wtnh.com/2015/02/08/how-to-avoid-flame-retardants/>

Check out our recent blog and take action!

What's in your couch?

Most of our home furniture is padded with foam to make it comfortable. In the past, high levels of flame retardant chemicals were added to the foam in furniture and baby products to meet the outdated furniture flammability standard known as Technical Bulletin 117 (TB117). These chemicals do not provide a significant fire safety benefit and they are associated with serious health issues, including cancer, hormone disruption, and learning disorders¹. Babies and young children are most vulnerable to the toxic effects of these chemicals since their bodies and brains are still developing.

One of the main sources of flame retardants in your home is the couch. Flame retardants escape and end up in the dust and air, increasing as the foam gets older and starts to break down. Toddlers have the highest levels of exposure because of their hand-to-mouth behavior and proximity to the floor where dusts settle. Biomonitoring studies on children have shown extremely high levels of flame retardants in their blood². The chemicals are washed into the water supply and cause damage to wildlife and water quality³.

But there is good news! As of January 2014, TB117 has been replaced by an improved standard, TB117-2013, which can be met without flame retardants while maintaining fire safety.

This is helping to change the market! Several major furniture manufacturers have announced that they have removed toxic flame retardant chemicals from their products, or have plans to do so. Just this week, Ashley Furniture, the largest manufacturer and retailer of furniture in the country, announced that they would be phasing out toxic flame retardants in their furniture!

At this point, it is vital that Ashley Furniture takes the next step by announcing a clear public timeframe for phasing out these chemicals in furniture foam and fabrics. Customers want and have a right to know what they are buying!

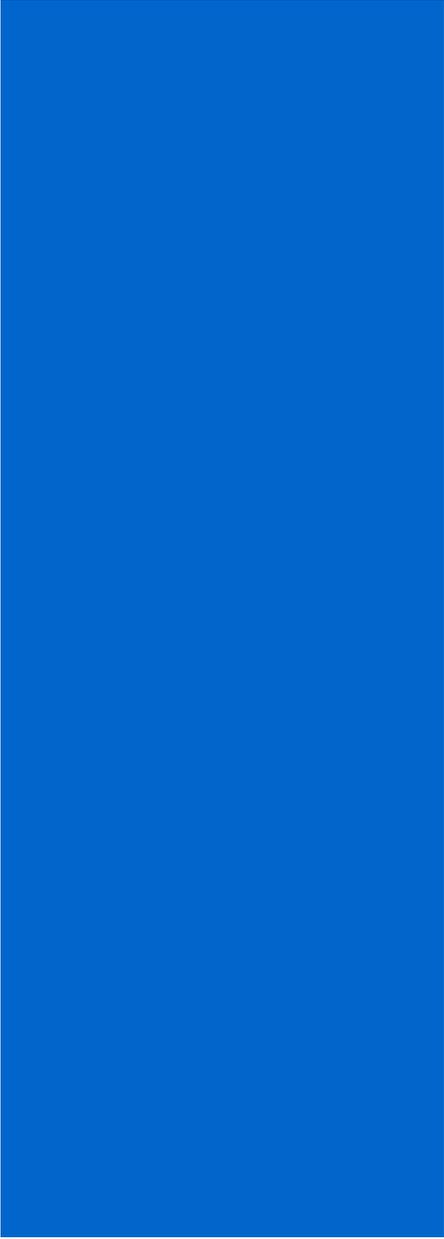
Please take a minute and join us in thanking Ashley Furniture for doing the right thing by phasing out toxic flame retardants in furniture and encourage them to finish the job by publicly disclosing their timeframe for eliminating these harmful chemicals in furniture foam, textiles and backing.

http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/6639/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=19136

¹ Shaw, Susan D., Arlene Blum et al., "Halogenated Flame Retardants: Do the Fire Safety Benefits Justify the Risks?" Reviews on Environmental Health Volume 25, no. 4 2010, pp261-305.

² Tests reveal high chemical levels in kids' bodies - CNN - Planet in Peril <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBXvJWWlgss>

³ From Homes to Waters: How Toxic Flame Retardants Pollute our Waterways <http://www.watoxics.org/homestowaters>



Like our work?? Follow us on Facebook at
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Coalition-for-a-Safe-Healthy-Connecticut/140671096045867>
and Twitter @safehealthyct.org and get involved!

Want to help in a different way? Your donation to Clean Water Action goes directly to support these initiatives and our work across CT!!

Thanks for all you do!
Anne, Susan and all the members of the Coalition!