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# MEETING LOG UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE

**Meeting Between:** Chairman Jacqueline Jones-Smith and representatives of the Upholstered Furniture Action Council (UFAC)/American Furniture Manufacturers Association (AFMA)

**Date of Meeting:** January 27, 1994

**Site of Meeting:** Chairman Jones-Smith's office, East-West Towers, rm. 724

**Meeting Topic:** UFAC voluntary program, including international activities

**Log Entry By:** Dale R. Ray, EC  
Project mgr, upholstered furniture petition

**Participants:** AFMA/UFAC: Joseph Gerard, AFMA VP/Gov't Affairs  
Joseph Ziolkowski, UFAC Executive Dir.  
Richard Warren, AMFA  
CPSC: Chairman Jones-Smith  
Clarence Bishop, Executive Assistant  
Dale Ray, EC

**Summary:**

Mr. Warren requested this meeting to give AFMA/UFAC the opportunity to present to the Chairman a) the results of the latest round of UFAC activity in Europe, and b) some new furniture fire data. Mr. Gerard gave a brief opening, and then turned the discussion over to Mr. Ziolkowski.

Mr. Ziolkowski described his recent trip to Paris for one of three European press conferences (Paris, Cologne, and, planned for April 1994, Milan). These locations are the sites of annual furniture shows, analogous to the annual U.S. furniture mart in High Point, NC. The press conferences are to announce the formation of "EUFAC" by the European Furniture Manufacturers Association (known as the EUA) in 10 EC nations considering mandatory furniture flammability regulations. Each of these nations has a trade association of furniture manufacturers, distributors and retailers; each national association is recruiting members to join the EUFAC voluntary program. This program is virtually identical to UFAC's program in the U.S. (UFAC is also working to establish a similar program in Mexico).

Mr. Ziolkowski discussed the British mandatory regulation governing open-flame ignition resistance in relation to the EUFAC program (which, like UFAC in the U.S., targets only smoldering

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ignition risks associated with smoking materials). UFAC's view is that the UK regulation and the EUFAC voluntary program are compatible.

Mr. Ziolkowski stated that products liability in Europe is not as great a concern to manufacturers as it is in the U.S. He also noted that firms marketing furniture are also interested in maintaining a wide range of fabric choices for consumers, as well as controlling costs, while providing an adequate level of fire safety in their products. In that regard, Mr. Ziolkowski mentioned a new decorative trim test in the UFAC test method; this section of the test becomes effective for furniture shipped after July 1, 1994, and is incorporated into the EUFAC program as well as the U.S. program.

Mr. Ziolkowski and Mr. Gerard reiterated their longstanding view that the UFAC program has contributed significantly to the gradual decline in the numbers of fires, deaths and injuries associated with upholstered furniture in the U.S., and expressed optimism about the potential for similar success in the new European venture.

After the discussion of EUFAC, Mr. Gerard and Mr. Ziolkowski presented some data tables showing the decrease in furniture fires and deaths between 1978 (when the UFAC program began) and 1991. This supplemented their submission of 1980-89 data in response to the NASFM petition. The decrease in fire losses was characterized as a major safety success, especially in view of the over 100 million pieces of pre-UFAC upholstered furniture still estimated to be in use by consumers.

The AFMA/UFAC presentation was accompanied by handouts regarding EUFAC and the hazard data. These are attached.

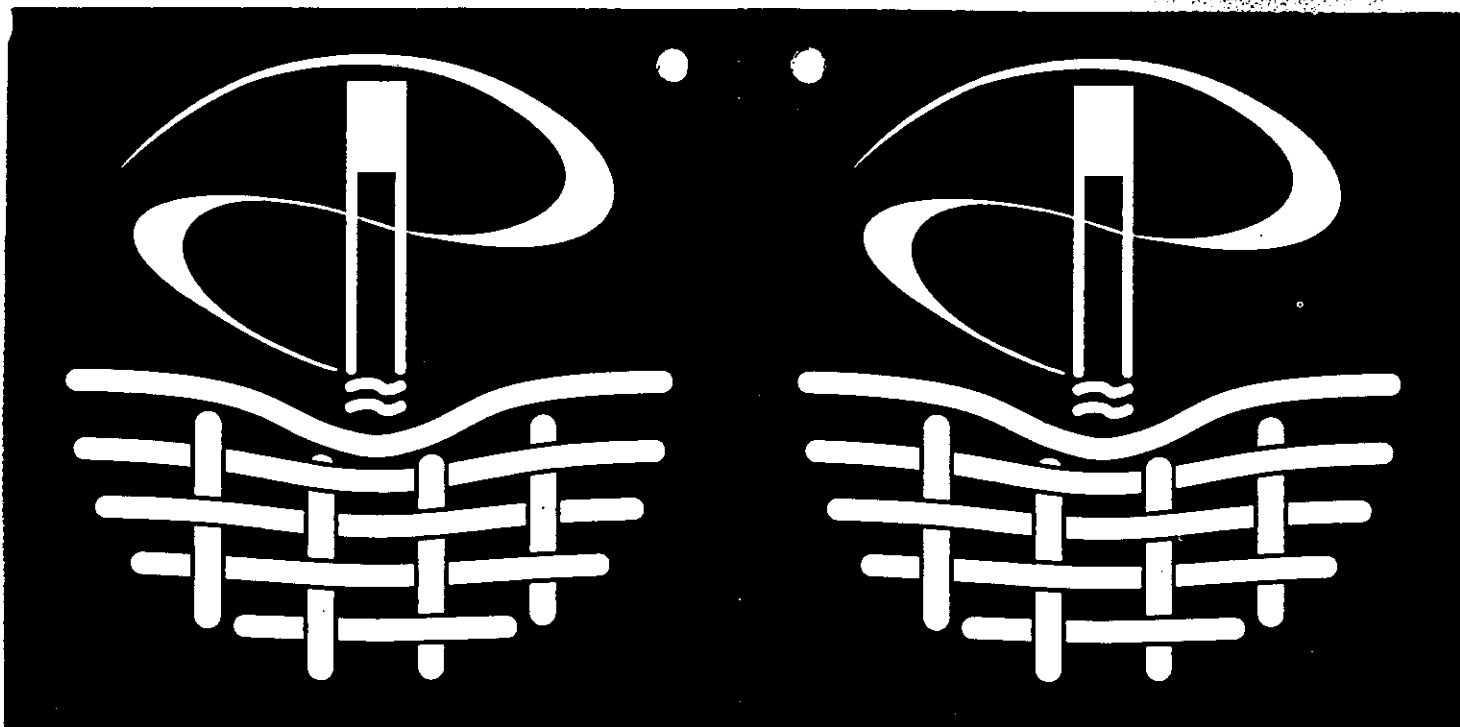


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**A** voluntary initiative  
to promote the fire safety  
of upholstered furniture



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Los fabricantes de este mueble certifican que este producto está fabricado de acuerdo con las normas EUFAC, elaboradas para reducir la probabilidad de incendio en los muebles a causa de cigarrillos. En cualquier caso, no queda eliminada totalmente la posibilidad de incendio.  
EUFAC : es una iniciativa voluntaria para promover la seguridad y prevención de incendios en el mueble tapizado.

O fabricante deste Móvel certifica que ele foi feito de acordo com os métodos EUFAC em vigor, designadamente os destinados a reduzir o fogo provocado por cigarros. Contudo o fogo nos estofos continua a ser possível.  
EUFAC : é uma iniciativa voluntária dos Fabricantes para promover a Segurança ao Fogo no Móvel Estofado.

De fabrikant van dit meubel verklaart dat dit meubel gefabriceerd is in overeenstemming met de EUFAC-methoden, zoals die ontwikkeld zijn om de kans op ontbranding van gestoffeerde meubelen ten gevolge van sigaretten te reduceren. De mogelijkheid tot brand blijft echter aanwezig.  
EUFAC : is een vrijwillig initiatief om de brandveiligheid van gestoffeerde meubelen te bevorderen.

Produsenten av dette møbelet garanterer at det er fremstilt i overensstemmelse med de EUFAC metodene som er utarbeidet for a redusere muligheten for brann i møbler forårsaket av sigaretter. Brann i stoppemøbler er imidlertid fortsatt mulig.  
EUFAC : er et frivillig tiltak til fremme av brannsikkerhet i stoppede møbler.

O κατασκευαστής αυτού του επίπλου πιστοποιεί ότι αυτό το προϊόν είναι κατασκευασμένο σύμφωνα με τις μεθόδους EUFAC, σχεδιασμένες να ελαττώνουν την πιθανότητα φωτιάς, εξ αιτίας σιγάρου, σε επίπλα σαλονιοῦ-καθηστικού (πολυθρόνες/καναπέδες). Ωστόσο, η δυνατότητα φωτιάς υπάρχει.  
EUFAC : είναι μία εκούσια πρωτοβουλία των βιομηχάνων προορισμένη να προωθήσει την ασφάλεια εναντίον της φωτιάς σε έπιπλα σαλονιοῦ-καθηστικού (πολυθρόνα/καναπέδες).

Le fabricant certifie que ce meuble a été fabriqué selon les méthodes EUFAC, destinées à réduire les risques d'inflammabilité des meubles rembourrés dus à la cigarette. Cependant, un risque d'incendie est toujours possible.  
EUFAC : est une initiative volontaire pour promouvoir la sécurité et la prévention des incendies des meubles rembourrés.

The manufacturer of this furniture certifies that it is made in accordance with the EUFAC methods, designed to reduce the likelihood of furniture fire from cigarettes. However, upholstery fires are still possible.  
EUFAC : is a voluntary initiative to promote the fire safety of upholstered furniture.

Der hersteller bestätigt hiermit, daß dieses erzeugnis der EUFAC-Richtlinie entspricht, die zur Reduzierung von Möbelbränden erstellt wurde. Dennoch können derartige Brände nicht gänzlich ausgeschlossen werden.  
EUFAC : ist eine freiwillige europäische Initiative zur Verringerung des Brandrisikos durch rauchermaterialien.

L'azienda produttrice certifica che questo mobile è prodotto conformemente ai metodi EUFAC, creati allo scopo di ridurre la probabilità di fuoco causato dalla sigaretta. Tuttavia, sussiste ancora la possibilità di infiammabilità delle parti imbottite.  
EUFAC : è un' iniziativa volontaria con l'obiettivo di promuovere la sicurezza al fuoco dei mobili imbottiti.

Tillverkaren av denna möbel försäkrar att den är gjord enligt de nya och förbättrade EUFAC-metoder som tagits fram för att minska risken för brand i stoppade möbler orsakad av cigarettglöd. Observera dock att brand fortfarande är möjlig.  
EUFAC : är ett frivilligt system för främjande av brandsäkerheten hos stoppade möbler.

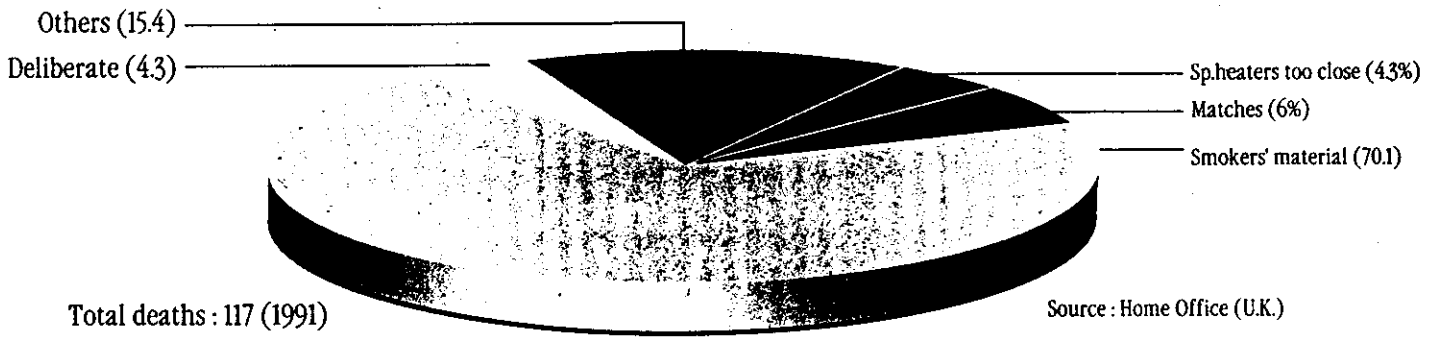
# What is the furniture flammability issue



The increased focus on fires in the home and in public buildings has caused concern in the private sector and in government. Many studies have been made to identify the ways that fires start, how they can be prevented and how consumers can be warned in time to go to safety.

A behavioral problem, lighted cigarettes left on upholstered furniture, was found to be one of the most common causes of fire.

In the United Kingdom, the country which has the most detailed fire statistics in Europe, in 1991, 70.1% of the deaths due to fires started in upholstered furniture were the result of fires ignited by a cigarette, although the most efficient actions would be to change the behavior and limit smoking, or to make self-extinguishing cigarettes (1).



The furniture industry has looked for construction methods that will make upholstered furniture more resistant to smouldering cigarettes. The furniture industry and its suppliers have searched for advances in technology that will retain consumer choice of fabrics and keep furniture cost increases to a minimum.

The problem, however, is a very complex one. Almost 30 millions pieces of upholstered furniture are sold annually in Europe. These pieces join, rather than replace the estimated 500 million in current use. Unlike appliances or other similar replaceable products, the arrival of new furniture in the home does not assure that existing furniture will no longer be in use. Older furniture is recycled so its life can be extended for decades beyond its original utilization. Ageing furniture is often placed in another room or a second house. After that, it is often sold or donated to a resale shop, or passed on to adult children living away from home.

This extends the cycle to second and even third users. The life span of furniture cannot be determined accurately, but has been calculated to average 30 years or more.

# *Who is affected by fires related to upholstered furniture*



We all are...whether there is a fire in our home, smoke damage from a fire in the apartment next door, or an increase in home insurance premiums to pay for the rising costs of coverage.

Although many adults do not smoke, smouldering cigarettes are the most common causes of home fires after accidents while cooking. Experts identify high-risk smokers as:

- 1) the elderly, infirm, and disabled;
- 2) those who abuse alcohol, medical or recreational drugs;
- 3) the very poor.

U.K. statistics indicate that many victims were asleep at the time of their injury.

Careless smokers place not only themselves in jeopardy, but also the other inhabitants of the home and all of the family's possessions. Smokers and nonsmokers alike should install smoke detectors in conjunction with adopting home safety habits. A study by the Canadian government found smoke detectors to be 85 percent effective in giving the first warning of a home fire. This early warning can provide valuable time in which a family can execute a prearranged escape plan.

Fire officials also encourage families to practice using escape routes at night. Families should rendez-vous at a predetermined place where members can assure themselves that everyone is safely out of the house.

Consumers also need to learn about recent advances in upholstered furniture construction which have made it more cigarette resistant. This safer furniture carries a EUFAC hangtag on the retail sales floor.

These changes in furniture construction, press and consumer education, as well as the increased use of smoke detectors have contributed in the United States to a 61% decline in upholstered furniture fires started by burning cigarettes.

These figures are based on data from the National Fire Protection Association and the United States Fire Administration for the years 1978-91.

# *How has the furniture industry responded to this challenge*



With increasing consumer safety at cause, the industry has chosen to develop a voluntary fire safety system, based on cigarette resistance, uncomplicated, easily applicable and economically feasible.

The Commission of the European Union (CEU) has initiated work on a directive concerning fire safety of upholstered furniture and related objects. The industry shares the goal of the CEU to render furniture safer, but believes that the EU project and the goals formulated therein are impossible to achieve under current technological and economic conditions. The voluntary programme is designed to make upholstered furniture safe from cigarette ignition as the industry knows how to do this and can afford to do so under the current technological and economic and competitive conditions.

Thanks to this voluntary programme the industry can act immediately.

Cigarette resistance resolves the major cause of fires involving death and upholstered furniture and the efficiency of this measure has been demonstrated in the US. It is also the most cost effective measure possible through measures addressing the materials of upholstered furniture.

The concept of EUFAC was developed in cooperation with the US industry who have successfully applied a similar programme since 1977. It was also made in cooperation with the European organisations of the industries supplying the furniture industry and it has obtained the support of ECOSA, the European consumer safety organisation.

The EUFAC programme is designed to :

- Be cost effective
- Retain designer and consumer choice of covers.
- Keep furniture price increase to the public to a minimum level.

Its American counterpart has been cited as the outstanding model for efforts to reduce mandatory government regulation through voluntary industry programmes.

In an answer to a parliamentary question, EC Commissioner Bangemann states that the voluntary programme is a major improvement in 10 EC Member States.



UPHOLSTERED  
FURNITURE  
ACTION  
COUNCIL

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## UFAC BACKGROUNDER--1994

UFAC began in 1978 in response to CPSC concerns regarding the cigarette ignition of upholstered furniture. Furniture manufacturers, retailers and suppliers joined together and developed a highly successful voluntary program to address those concerns on a cost effective basis---UFAC

Today more that 90% of the dollar volume of U.S. manufactured upholstered furniture is pledged to be in compliance with this voluntary industry program. Additionally, we are proud to announce that UFAC has grown internationally to include UFAC Canada, eleven members of the European Community, and there are on-going discussions with Mexico.

Published data on the effectiveness of the UFAC program on a national basis from the National Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Association conclude:

--Deaths associated with upholstered furniture have decreased a total of 56.2% from 1978 through 1991. The upholstered furniture related deaths associated with smoking materials have decreased 63.8% over the same period, and upholstered furniture deaths related to open flame sources decreased by 25% during that time.

--Incidence of upholstered furniture related fires have decreased 61.4% from 1978 through 1991. Incidence of fires related to smoking material and upholstered furniture decreased by 69.6% over the same period. Fires related to open flame and upholstered furniture decreased by 53.2% during the same time.

While UFAC's record is impressive, it is important to note that it is an on-going program. Through nationwide public service announcements and in other ways, UFAC is active in the consumer education arena. In addition, UFAC sponsors seminars and training for the furniture and related industries and continually searches for new ways to make furniture safer for the American public.

January 1994

### MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

American Furniture  
Manufacturers Association  
Furniture Manufacturers  
Association of Grand Rapids

National Home Furnishings  
Association

California Furniture  
Manufacturers Association

Southwestern Furniture  
Manufacturers Association

# TRENDS IN UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE FIRES AND FIRE CASUALTIES

|                                    | FIRES   |         | %<br>CHANGE |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|
|                                    | 1978    | 1991    |             |
| TOTAL RESIDENTIAL<br>FIRES         | 757,500 | 478,000 | -36.9       |
| ALL UPHOLSTERED<br>FURNITURE FIRES | 43,000  | 16,600  | -61.4       |
| SMOKING MATERIALS                  | 28,000  | 8,500   | -69.6       |
| OPEN FLAME                         | 7,900   | 3,700   | -53.2       |
| OTHER                              | 7,100   | 4,400   | -38.0       |

SOURCE: U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

# TRENDS IN UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE FIRES AND FIRE CASUALTIES

|                                    | DEATHS |       | CHANGE<br>% |
|------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|
|                                    | 1978   | 1991  |             |
| TOTAL RESIDENTIAL<br>FIRES         | 6,840  | 3,575 | -47.7       |
| ALL UPHOLSTERED<br>FURNITURE FIRES | 1,600  | 700   | -56.2       |
| SMOKING MATERIALS                  | 1,300  | 470   | -63.8       |
| OPEN FLAME                         | 200    | 150   | -25.0       |
| OTHER                              | 100    | 80    | -20.0       |

SOURCE: U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION