

Massachusetts legislation to protect children's and firefighters' health from toxic flame retardants

[S.1132](#) Sponsored by: Senator Cynthia Stone Creem

Assigned to the Joint Committee on Public Health

[H.2119](#)

Sponsored by: Representative Marjorie Decker

Assigned to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security



*Update: The Flame Retardant Bill S.1132 and Bill H. 2119 were both favorably reported out of the Public Health Committee.

Background

Toxic flame retardants are added to highchairs, car seats, nursing pads, furniture, carpet pads, electronic equipment (including toys), and many more common household products. These chemicals do not stay in products; they get out into the dust in our homes and the air that we breathe, and ultimately into our bodies. Firefighters are exposed to flame retardants when they go into burning buildings. Worse, these flame retardants—which are linked to cancer, nervous system damage, decreased fertility, and other health problems—are ineffective at stopping fires. Because children are still developing, they are much more vulnerable to the health risks associated with flame retardants. Their tendency to touch their faces and mouths add to the danger and put them at even greater risk.

Commonly used flame retardants such as polybrominated di-phenyl ethers (PBDEs) and Chlorinated Tris—which was banned from children's pajamas in the 1970s) are extremely persistent—they take a long time to break down in the environment and in our bodies. They've been found in many likely and unlikely places including the blood of new born babies and ice in the arctic.

Fortunately, there are ways to make furniture more fire safe and less toxic, like using less flammable materials and safer alternative chemicals. Many companies are already doing so.

As scientific studies provide mounting evidence of health risks associated with toxic flame retardant chemicals, increasing public concern has pushed manufacturers and retailers to take steps on their own to eliminate these toxins from their products. In fact, this February our nation's biggest furniture retailer and manufacturer, Ashley Furniture, announced plans to phase out flame retardant chemicals from its products.

What the bills do

An act to protect children and families from harmful flame retardants

This bill will require manufacturers and retailers selling products to the commonwealth to phase

out the use of PBDEs and Chlorinated Tris in children's products and residential furniture. Importantly, it also requires that any company that ceases using one of these chemicals replace it with a safer alternative.

An act to prohibit the distribution in commerce of children's products and upholstered furniture containing certain flame retardants, and for other purposes

This bill will require manufacturers and retailers to phase out the use of flame retardants in children's products and residential upholstered furniture. The flame retardant chemicals that would be phased out include Chlorinated Tris (TDCPP, TCEP, TBBPA), Decabromodiphenyl ether, Antimony trioxide, HBCD, TBPH, TBB, Chlorinated paraffins, and TCPP.

Massachusetts is not alone!

Thirteen states have banned PBDE and/or Chlorinated Tris chemicals for use in children's products and/or residential furniture. PBDEs, are so widely regarded as toxic that they have been banned in 172 countries.

[Take Action: Protect children's and Fire fighters' health!](#)

[Ask](#) your legislators to phase out toxic flame retardants!