



# KEEPING YOUR HOME AND FAMILY *HEALTHY*

Reduce your exposure to  
**FLAME RETARDANTS**

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# WHAT ARE THEY USED IN AND WHY?

Manufacturers use flame retardant chemicals to meet flammability standards for consumer products. These chemicals slow flames in the event of a fire. They are found in products like:



Electronics



Car seats



Tents



Building insulation



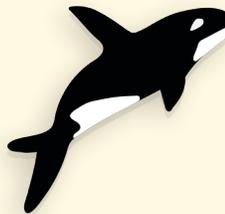
Foam



Older upholstered furniture

# WHAT ARE *FLAME RETARDANTS*?

*Flame retardant chemicals are used to meet safety standards, but scientists now understand the negative health and environmental impacts of some of these chemicals. They are found across Washington's environment.*



Some flame retardants **bioaccumulate**, harming species at the top of the food chain.

With changes in regulation, flame retardants **aren't required** or used in certain products anymore.



Not all flame retardants are the same, **only some are concerning** for our health.

**Taking preventative measures** works to reduce your exposure.



<sup>1</sup> Labels should state "this product contains NO added flame retardant chemicals."

<sup>2</sup> Search these product finders: [tccertified.com/product-finder](http://tccertified.com/product-finder) or [epeat.net](http://epeat.net)

<sup>3</sup> Try HomeFree for a list: [homefree.healthybuilding.net/products](http://homefree.healthybuilding.net/products)

## HOW COULD I BE **EXPOSED?**

As you use certain products, flame retardants release into the dust and air. Inhaling and ingesting that contaminated dust is how most exposure to these toxic chemicals happens. After washing clothes, flame retardants escape into the environment, where wildlife can be exposed long after the chemicals leave your home.

*Common pathways for exposure:*



Consuming contaminated dust

**OR**

Inhaling contaminated dust



## HOW COULD THEY AFFECT **ME?**



**Harm to brain development**



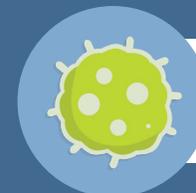
**Reproductive impairment**



**Developmental toxicity**



**Liver toxicity**



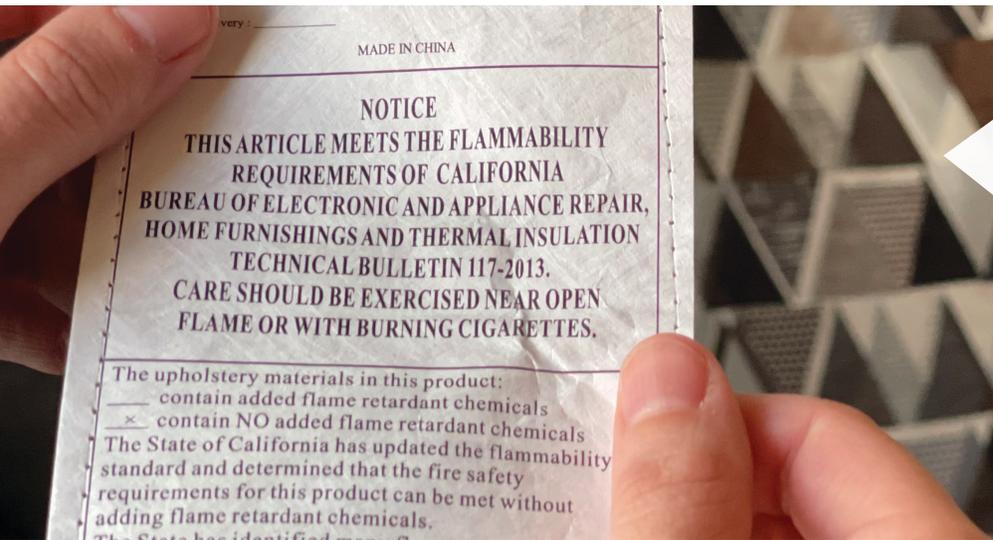
**Carcinogenic**

<sup>4</sup> [ecology.wa.gov/PBDE](http://ecology.wa.gov/PBDE)

<sup>5</sup> [https://foam.pratt.duke.edu/sites/foam.pratt.duke.edu/files/u32/Foam%20fact%20sheet\\_10-29-19.pdf](https://foam.pratt.duke.edu/sites/foam.pratt.duke.edu/files/u32/Foam%20fact%20sheet_10-29-19.pdf)

# WHAT CAN I DO TO **PREVENT EXPOSURE?**

Here are some steps you can take to reduce the threat of flame retardants in your home:



## **Purchase products without flame retardants.**

- Read the flammability label carefully when buying upholstered products.<sup>1</sup>
- When it's time for a new laptop or tablet, [look for safer electronics](#).<sup>2</sup>
- Look for [safer building and maintenance products](#).<sup>3</sup>

## **Reduce exposure with a few at-home practices.**

Flame retardants collect in our house dust. Vacuum and dust your home frequently. Use a vacuum with a HEPA to capture the small stuff. Wash your hands often with soap and water. It's especially important after cleaning your house and before eating.



## **Protect yourself by learning what products contain flame retardants.**

- Find out which consumer products contain these chemicals on our [flame retardants webpage](#).<sup>4</sup>
- If you love your couch, [test it for free](#)<sup>5</sup> and figure out which foam you may want to replace.

