

Products Too Unsafe For Use In the Home:

Common-Sense Expert Guidance to Consumers, Manufacturers and Others

Fire safety standards for the most combustible products in your home may be outdated or non-existent. Several new consumer product fire safety standards are under development by industry organizations, but these processes typically consume many years.

These standards define the *minimum* acceptable level of fire safety -- a calculation that begins with data from actual fires, then employs science to describe why a product hazard exists, and eventually reflects some balance of public safety and economic factors. The process cannot be rushed but, all the while, people die and are injured and property is destroyed by fires involving consumer products.

We may not yet know what is safe enough, but public safety officials, scientists, standards organizations and manufacturers know a great deal about what clearly is too *unsafe* for products sold for use in the home.

Until new standards are in place, this website will contain common-sense guidance -- based on the views of experts from industry, regulatory agencies, standards organizations and fire protection authorities -- to help consumers, manufacturers, retailers and others avoid products that are known to be too unsafe for use in the home.

This expert guidance will focus exclusively on those consumer products identified by state and local fire safety officials which are involved in the fires they are seeing in the real world -- some of which are too new to show up in the national fire data. The Science Advisory Committee of the National Association of State Fire Marshals then looks at the fire performance of the products in question.¹ The scientific perspective is shared with the manufacturers of the products for additional input. Finally, a draft statement is circulated to fire safety officials, scientists and manufacturers for additional comment. All comments are considered, appropriate changes are made and a statement is adopted. Each expert guidance document is accompanied by a listing and full texts of all comments received. All expert guidance documents are “works in progress”-- that is, they are open to further modification at any time if better information surfaces.

¹ For more information on the Science Advisory Committee, please visit:
<http://www.firemarshals.org/about/sac.html>

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[Expert guidance on consumer electronics and computer equipment sold for use in children's rooms.](#)

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Why are we concentrating on the home? We already know that the vast majority of fire deaths and injuries occur in the home. Unlike offices, stores and factories, we know that homes rarely are protected by automatic fire sprinklers or sophisticated detecting and alarm systems. We know that many fires in the home spread very rapidly, fully involving a home before the fire department even arrives, and that is because of the many highly combustible products found in the home.

NASFM and its partners welcome comments on these documents and suggestions of guidance on other products. Contact us at govtaffairs@firemarshals.org