



Information Kit on Fabric Flammability Testing

1 Introduction

This document provides background information for people interested in having fabrics flammability tested for use in commercial furniture applications.

2 Requirements

The burning behaviour requirements for fabrics in the Standards AS/NZS 4438 - *Height adjustable swivel chairs* and AS/NZS 4688 - *Fixed height chairs* are as follows:

Covering materials and filling materials shall meet the burning behaviour performance as set out in AS/NZS 4088.1.

NOTE: More stringent requirements such as BS 5852 Source 5 for upholstery or filling materials or other regulatory requirements may need to be met in public space seating.

3 Combinations of foams and fabrics

In both AS/NZS 4088.1. and BS 5852 it is recommended that the fabric being assessed be tested in combination with the interliner (if applicable) and filling (foam) that will form the composite that is intended to be used in the final product assembly i.e. the finished item of furniture. However, in most cases a fabric supplier will have little or no control over the inner layers (interliners and fillings) that will be specified in combination with their fabric.

The alternative (available for fabric assessed to the requirements of AS/NZS 4088.1 only) is that testing be performed using a standard non-flame retardant foam that represents a probable worst case combination. This allows - where the composite is successfully tested - for the results to be 'generalised' i.e. it is considered likely that if the fabric performs satisfactorily with this foam it will perform satisfactorily with all other foams. This is the most common approach to fabric flammability testing and certification.

BS 5852 testing is only ever performed on a particular composite and results cannot be generalised beyond that. Compliance, therefore, can only be claimed with respect to the actual combination of foam/interliner/fabric that was tested.

4 Flammability (Ignitability) test levels

Both AS/NZS 4438 - Height adjustable swivel chairs and AS/NZS 4688 – Fixed height chairs require **as a minimum** that fabrics meet the burning behaviour performance requirements as set out in AS/NZS 4088.1. The ignition source specified in this standard is a smouldering cigarette. The test (AS/NZS 4088.1) is suitable for normal commercial/office applications.

Chair fabrics intended for use in 'public space' seating may be specified as requiring compliance to more stringent testing eg BS 5852 Source 5. The ignition source specified as 'source 5' in this standard is a 'flaming wooden crib'. Ignition sources 0 to 4 are also available for testing. Ignition source 0 is approximately equal to that used in AS/NZS 4088.1, so is rarely specified in Australia or New Zealand. Ignition sources 1 to 5 are more severe, each approximately twice the energy value of the previous. They are appropriate for environments where the risk of ignition is considered greater than normal commercial/office applications (eg public spaces). The severity of the ignition source chosen depends on the furniture's intended end use environment. It is up to the client or specifier to make this determination. Please note: specifiers and/or regulators may chose to include other, or additional, flammability requirements based, for example, on the Australian Building Code or on specific analysis of the hazards present in a particular environment.

Although Sources 1 to 5 of BS 5852 are flaming ignition sources it cannot be assumed that satisfactory performance against a flaming source will automatically give satisfactory performance against a smouldering ignition source. It is therefore necessary to submit test specimens to both smouldering and flaming ignition tests to comply with any of the BS 5852 Sources 1 to 5 i.e. both AS/NZS 4088.1 and BS 5852 Source X.

5 Costs

Please contact Furntech for a quotation.

Prices are subject to 10% GST.

NOTE: + Sources 0 to 4 are also available at the same charge. Source 0 is approximately equivalent to AS/NZS 4088.1. Sources 1 to 5 are progressively more severe.

The Institute's laboratory is certified by NATA for the most common fabric flammability tests including those described above. Further information can be obtained from the Institute on 03 6326 6155 or from the website www.furntech.org.au

5.1 AFRDI Blue Tick certification

Furntech-AFRDI does not offer **AFRDI Blue Tick certification** for fabrics.

6 Samples

6.1 AS/NZS 4088.1

For AS/NZS 4088.1 two samples of 800 x 650 mm (at least) with the long side parallel to the selvage are required.

6.2 AS/NZS 4088.1 and BS 5852 Source X

The minimum size and number of **fabric** and **interliner (if applicable)** and **slab foam** samples:

- two samples of 800 x 650 mm (at least) fabric with the long side parallel to the selvage; and
- 750 x 450 x 75 slab foam, two off; plus interliner (if applicable) 1500 x 1500 (or full roll width x 1500), two off; plus fabric 1500 x 1500 (or full roll width x 1500), two off.

7 Timing

Assuming there are no problems and that staff and equipment are available, fabric testing usually takes around five working days (including conditioning). When the sample, the Testing Request form and payment are all received, the item will be placed on the testing schedule.

8 Payment

Furntech-AFRDI policy is that **PAYMENT MUST BE MADE BEFORE TESTING COMMENCES**. Please phone 03 6326 6155 to request an invoice if this will help to facilitate payment. Facilities are available for payment by Visa and MasterCard.

9 Freight

PLEASE MARK THE MODEL NAME/NUMBER ON EACH SAMPLE BEFORE DISPATCH.

For BS 5852 fabrics and interliners (if applicable) please indicate whether they have been chemically treated to reduce ignitability or if they are considered to be made of inherently flame retardant materials (eg fabric woven from flame retardant yarns, PVC). Foams should also be supplied including details of any combustion modification treatment.

For AS/NZS 4088.1 fabrics and interliners (if applicable) please include laundering instructions as per the care label supplied with the fabric.

To assist with matching samples with Testing Request forms, please attach a copy of the Testing Request form to each set of samples.

Refer to the Institute's [Information Kit on Freight to Furntech-AFRDI](#). Distribution of this Kit in hardcopy form will include the freight-related information as a supplementary sheet.

10 The next step

If you wish to proceed with testing, please follow these steps:

- copy the Testing Request form and complete it for each fabric sample, fax one copy to Furntech-AFRDI and attach a copy to the sample;
- on each sample mark
 - a) the name of the company,
 - b) the description,
 - c) the front or face side; and
 - d) material information and laundering instructions as per Section 9; and
- calculate payment required from the price list at the front of this paper and send your payment to Furntech-AFRDI (we also take Visa and MasterCard). Please phone 03 63 266 155 to request an invoice if this will help facilitate payment.

11 Queries

If you have any problems with any of this please phone Furntech-AFRDI on 03 6326 6155.

Furntech-AFRDI Testing Information Kit – Fabric Flammability

Testing Request – Fabric Flammability

Please complete for **each model** to be tested and **fax (03 6326 3090)** or **email (info@furntech.org.au)** one copy and attach another to the sample before dispatch.

All fields must be completed.

ORGANISATION:

PRIMARY CONTACT: *(Who do we contact during testing?)*

STREET ADDRESS:

.....P/CODE:.....

TEL: FAX:.....

WEB:.....

EMAIL:.....ABN:.....

FACTORY NAME:.....

FACTORY ADDRESS:

.....COUNTRY:.....P/CODE:.....

Product Description

MANUFACTURER'S PRODUCT ID: *(PRINT the name you wish to appear on the certificate)*

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PRODUCT DESCRIPTION:

COMPOSITION:

WEIGHT PER LINEAL METRE:

LAUNDERING INSTRUCTIONS:

TESTS REQUIRED: AS/NZS 4088.1

BS 5852 Source

Authorisations and Declaration

I warrant and declare that the information provided is accurate in every detail.

I authorise Furntech-AFRDI or its agents to carry out tests at the quoted price.

Signature of authorised officer:

Name *(PRINT)*

Position in company: Date:

Test sample(s) will not normally be returned. If you do want them returned, please indicate here (note extra freight charges will apply):

YES

Any significant issues pending/impending with product (e.g. field failures, claims, recalls)?

YES (if yes, please attach summary) NO

OPTIONAL: Should the product(s) described above be certified by Furntech-AFRDI, I authorise Furntech-AFRDI to list the compliance certificate on its website.

YES NO

Published by Furntech-AFRDI, the Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute, an independent not-for-profit technical organisation serving furniture buyers and sellers in Australia and New Zealand.

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