

Toxic-Free Children Act

Protect Alaska's Children from Exposures to Toxic Chemicals



The Problem

Toxic flame retardant chemicals...

- ...are associated with adverse health effects including cancer, miscarriages, premature births, neurological delays, developmental impairment, and respiratory problems.
- ...are in a variety of products we use every day, including things that children touch directly such as toys, nap mats, changing mats, nursing pillows, upholstered furniture, plastics, paints, sealants, carpet padding, and the plastic casings of some electronics. These chemicals can be released from objects such as couch foam and become attached to household dust that people can inhale or ingest.
- ...put children at greater risk than adults because of their smaller body size and the fact that their brains and bodies are still developing. Children play on the floor and put their hands in their mouths, so they ingest more of these harmful flame retardants that leach into the dust. Studies have found 2-5 times higher levels of chemicals in toddlers than in their parents.
- ...take a long time to break down which allows them to build up the food chain in fish, wildlife, and the breast milk of nursing mothers.
- ...do not provide fire safety benefits. While chemical companies say their flame retardants make our products safer, the truth is that these chemicals have been shown to be ineffective in preventing fires. In fact, they cause more harm than good as they generate excessive smoke and chemical byproducts that expose firefighters to a toxics soup, including cancer-causing dioxins and furans.
- ...have been identified in the bodies of more than 90% of Americans according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



Our Solution

The *Toxic-Free Children Act* protects Alaskan children and firefighters from routine exposure to ten of the most toxic flame retardants by preventing the manufacture, sale, and distribution of these chemicals in children's products and home furniture. It will also require the labeling of children's products and upholstered furniture to inform people whether these products contain toxic flame retardant chemicals.



Eliminating the Toxic Ten:

1. **Antimony Trioxide.** Health Effects: cancer, miscarriages, premature births, respiratory difficulties.
2. **Chlorinated Paraffins.** Health Effects: cancer, gallbladder and liver toxicity, low weight of babies.
3. **Deca-BDE.** Health Effects: thyroid, reproductive, reduced mentation and cognition.
4. **HBCD.** Health Effects: cancer, thyroid, reproductive, developmental, behavioral effects.
5. **TBB.** Health Effects: thyroid, reproductive, damage to DNA.
6. **TBPH.** Health Effects: thyroid, reproductive, damage to DNA.
7. **TBBPA.** Health Effects: thyroid, reproductive, uterine tumors.
8. **TCEP (tris).** Health Effects: cancer, reproductive, neurological, kidney and liver tumors, brain.
9. **TCPP (tris).** Health Effects: cancer, disrupts red blood cells, irritates skin.
10. **TDCPP (tris).** Health Effects: cancer, reduce semen quality, DNA mutations, neurological.

The Rationale

- **33 policies in 13 states have already been adopted to phase out toxic fire retardant chemicals.**
- **Alaskans are exposed to higher levels of flame retardant chemicals than the rest of the nation.** This is because Alaskans spend more time indoors in highly insulated areas with less ventilation over the long winter, and also because these chemicals travel long distances and concentrate in northern areas. Birth defects in Alaska are twice as high in the USA as a whole, and Alaska Native infants have twice the risk of birth defects as white infants in Alaska. The Toxic-Free Children's Act will go a long way toward protecting all of Alaska's children.
- **Phasing out flame retardant chemicals is a cost effective solution to preventing harm to our children, families, and firefighters.**
- **The Toxic-Free Children Act is good for business and our state.** It would provide important safety information that helps Alaskan businesses meet the increasing consumer demand for safer products. It encourages innovation and the development of safer alternatives in furniture and other products. It also creates market pressure on the chemical industry to provide safe chemicals to manufacturers and, in turn, safer products to retailers and consumers. In fact, large manufacturers are already phasing out flame retardant chemicals from their products with no increase in price.

Please visit akaction.org for more information, or contact su.c@akaction.org