

## Toxic-Free Firefighters and Children Act (HB 27)

The Toxic-Free Firefighters and Children Act (HB 27) would protect Alaskan firefighters and children from exposure to dangerous flame-retardant chemicals. Fourteen states and cities have already passed 43 laws to end the use of toxic fire-retardant chemicals; Anchorage is one of the most recent to do so. In 2019, Anchorage passed an ordinance that now stands among the strongest laws in the nation in banning four major classes of toxic flame-retardant chemicals from children's products, furniture, and mattresses.

### Children's Products and Household Goods Contain Toxic Flame Retardant Chemicals

These harmful chemicals are found in toys, nap mats, changing mats, nursing pillows, children's car seats, and the plastic casings of some electronics – as well as upholstered furniture, plastics, paints, sealants, carpet padding, and other household products we use every day.



### Toddlers Have Higher Levels of Chemicals in Their Bodies Than Their Parents

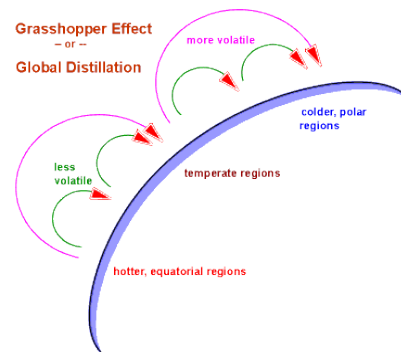
Toxic flame-retardant chemicals are released from furniture foam and other household products and become attached to dust in our homes that people can inhale or swallow. Because children play on the floor and put their hands in their mouths, they ingest and are more highly exposed to harmful flame retardants. Studies have found levels of flame-retardants in toddlers at levels two to five times higher than in their parents.

### Flame Retardants Are Harmful to Human Health

The U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified harmful flame retardants in the bodies of more than 90% of Americans. Exposure to flame retardants is associated with adverse health effects such as cancer, miscarriages, premature births, neurological and developmental delays, and respiratory problems.

### Alaskans Are Exposed to Higher Levels of Toxic Chemicals Than the Rest of the Nation,

because Alaskans spend more time indoors in more insulated homes with less ventilation during the long winters. Also, global distillation occurs when persistent chemicals such as flame retardants are transported by atmospheric and oceanic currents from warmer to colder regions of the Earth and remain there. The cold acts as a hemispheric sink and traps the harmful chemicals in Alaska and other Arctic and sub-Arctic regions.



### Alaska's Children Are Especially Vulnerable

Birth defects in Alaska are twice as high as the U.S., and Alaska Native infants have twice the incidence of birth defects as non-Native infants. The Toxic-Free Firefighters and Children Act will go a long way toward preventing harm to children and protecting all Alaskans.



## **Flame Retardant Chemicals Cause More Harm than Good**

Flame-retardant chemicals do not provide proven fire safety benefits. While chemical companies say their flame retardants make our products safer, the truth is that flame retardants added to polyurethane foam and plastic products have been proven ineffective in fire protection and make our homes more toxic. They also make fires more toxic by generating excessive smoke and toxic byproducts that expose firefighters to a toxic soup, including cancer-causing dioxins and furans.

### **There Are No Federal Laws that Protect People from Flame Retardants**

Although there are no federal laws to protect people from the unnecessary addition of flame retardants to furniture and children's products, the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a warning about products containing organohalogen flame retardant chemicals:

"The known adverse health effects of these chemicals to consumers include: reproductive impairment (e.g., abnormal gonadal development, reduced number of ovarian follicles, reduced sperm count, increased time to pregnancy); neurological impacts (e.g., decreased IQ in children, impaired memory, learning deficits, altered motor behavior, hyperactivity); endocrine disruption and interference with thyroid hormone action (potentially contributing to diabetes and obesity); genotoxicity; cancer; and immune disorders. These chemicals have a disproportionately negative health effect on vulnerable populations, including children." [September 28, 2017].



At the same time the CPSC issued this guidance, it began a rulemaking process to ban the use of the entire class of organohalogen flame retardants from 1) children's toys and child care articles, 2) mattresses and mattress pads, 3) upholstered household furniture, and 4) the outer plastic casings for electronics. Because that rulemaking will likely take years to complete, the CPSC issued a public warning to request that manufacturers of the products "eliminate the use of such chemicals in these products." Unwilling to wait for the slow-moving federal process, nineteen states are considering 31 policies in current legislative sessions to ban toxic flame retardants: Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

### **The Toxic-Free Firefighters and Children Act is Good for Business**

It helps Alaskan businesses meet the increasing consumer demand for safer products and encourages innovation and the development of safer alternatives in furniture and other products.

To read the full text of the bill, follow: [bit.ly/2rNOboN](http://bit.ly/2rNOboN)