Environmental & Emergency Management

Furnishings & Flammability Policy Requirements

The University of Massachusetts Lowell recognizes the importance of fire safety and sprinkler protection within building design and the contribution of flame spread from interior furnishings and décor. Whereas UMass Lowell buildings are not all 100% sprinkler protected and vary in age from mid 1850s (mills) to presently being constructed, the following policy for the purchase of upholstered furniture and molded seating furnishings in all UMass Lowell buildings is provided to assure reasonable safety and compliance with applicable fire codes and standards.

As referenced in fire standards and best practices, UMass Lowell regards MA 527 CMR 29, Cal 133, Cal 117, NFPA 101:10.3, ASTM E 1590 and ASTM E 1537, as the primary flammability fire spread standards for upholstered furniture and molded seating furnishings. Adherence to specific Certification(s) for flammability spread of upholstered furniture and molded seating furnishings are directly related to the fire protection systems provided within the building design, use group, and capability of passive fire protection building features. Below are “Purchasing of Furnishings Requirements” for UMass Lowell buildings. These requirements do not apply to any furnishings not categorized as upholstered furniture or molded seating.

1 New Building Construction or 100% Renovation of an Existing Building, equipped throughout with a code compliant fire sprinkler system
   A. Upholstered furniture and molded seating furnishings purchased shall meet the requirements of Cal 117 Standard and MA 527 CMR 29.
   B. Furnishings shall be permanently labeled with; building name, date of purchase and flammability standard(s) met.
   C. Furnishings shall not be relocated to any building (residential, academic, research, business, mixed use, etc..), not equipped with a code compliant fire sprinkler system throughout, and with the required passive fire protection features that have been inspected and accepted by EEM.

2 Existing Buildings (Non Sprinkler Compliant):
   A. All upholstered furniture and molded seating furnishings purchased shall meet the Cal 133 Standard or the requirements of the NFPA 101:10.3.3, when tested in accordance with ASTM E 1537 and consistent with 527 CMR 29. In addition, mattresses purchased shall meet the heat release limitation requirements of NFPA 101:10.3.4 when tested in accordance with ASTM E 1590. These are minimum requirements until such time as the building has been determined to have a code compliant fire sprinkler system that recognizes the type and quantity of fuel loading throughout, and with the required passive fire protection features that have been inspected and accepted by EEM.
   B. Furnishings shall be permanently labeled with; building name, date of purchase and flammability standard(s) met.
   C. Furnishings shall not be relocated to any building (residential, academic, research, business, mixed use, etc..), not equipped with a code compliant fire sprinkler system throughout, and with the required passive fire protection features that have been inspected and accepted by EEM.

3 Existing Building (Sprinkler Compliant):
   A. All upholstered furniture and molded seating furnishings purchased shall meet the requirements of Cal 117 Standard and MA 527 CMR 29.
   B. Furnishings shall be permanently labeled with; building name, date of purchase and flammability standard(s) met.
   C. Furnishings shall not be relocated to any building (residential, academic, research, business, mixed use, etc..), not equipped with a code compliant fire sprinkler system throughout, and with the required passive fire protection features that have been inspected and accepted by EEM.

For further information or clarification to this EEM University of Massachusetts Lowell fire safety policy, please contact Richard Wood, Life Safety Systems Manager at Richard_Wood@uml.edu or Office 978-934-2618.