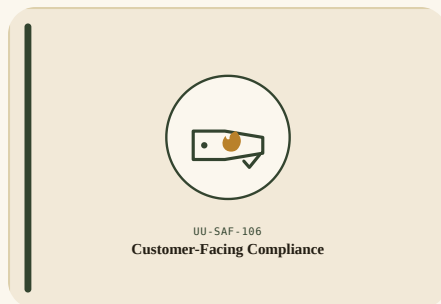


Customer-Facing Compliance: Disclosing Materials and Flammability Ratings

What to tell customers who ask about fire resistance and flame retardants — and what not to claim without documentation.



1. Why what you tell the customer matters as much as what you source

A shop can source compliant materials and still create liability exposure by what it tells the customer about them. Flammability and material claims made casually — "this is fire-resistant," "this meets code" — without documentation behind them are a common, avoidable exposure. This guide covers what to disclose, and how, when customers ask.

2. What customers actually ask about

CUSTOMER QUESTION	HOW TO ANSWER
"Is this fabric/foam fire-resistant?"	Answer from the manufacturer's current compliance documentation for that specific product — never from general impression or how a similar-looking material performed in the past. If you don't have

CUSTOMER QUESTION	HOW TO ANSWER
	current documentation, say so and offer to get it before quoting a claim
"Does this contain flame-retardant chemicals?"	Answer from supplier documentation. Foam and fabric sourcing on this point has changed significantly industry-wide since California's TB117-2013 revision (see <i>Flammability Standards, UU-SAF-103</i>) — don't assume based on how things used to be done
"Will this meet code for my business / rental property / facility?"	This is a question for the customer's specifier, architect, fire marshal, or code official for that specific occupancy — not a yes/no the shop should answer on its own authority. Help the customer get the right documentation to bring to that conversation
"What's your warranty on this?"	Separate the shop's workmanship warranty from the material manufacturer's warranty explicitly — see <i>Warranty & Claims Handling, UU-OPS-105</i>

3. Documentation discipline

- Keep current compliance sheets on file for every fabric and foam product the shop regularly uses, not just the ones a customer happens to ask about.
- When a customer's job has a real compliance stake (commercial, hospitality, healthcare, rental property, childcare facility), get the compliance documentation in writing and pass a copy to the customer as part of the job file — this protects both sides if the question ever comes up again.
- Don't rely on memory of what a material "used to be" — manufacturers change formulations, and a claim that was true of a product two years ago may not be true of what's shipping today.

4. What not to say

- Avoid absolute claims ("fireproof," "guaranteed to meet any code") — no upholstery material is literally fireproof, and code requirements vary by jurisdiction and occupancy type in ways a shop can't guarantee against sight unseen.
- Avoid stating a specific standard is met ("this meets California TB117") unless the current manufacturer documentation for that specific product actually says so.

- When uncertain, say so plainly and offer to find out, rather than guessing to avoid an awkward "I don't know" in front of a customer.

Shop practice

Treat compliance claims the same way you'd treat a measurement — something you verify and document, not something you estimate from experience. It's a small habit that closes off one of the more avoidable liability exposures in the business.

Sources

General trade reference. For any job with a real compliance or liability stake, confirm current requirements with the material manufacturer, the applicable code official, and your insurer or counsel.

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