

Protecting what protects us: Why we need BFRs more than ever



The International
Bromine Council

Brominated Flame Retardants (BFRs) help protect us from the risks of fire. They do this by inhibiting ignition or slowing down the spread of flames. This ensures high levels of fire protection and keeps us safe.

BFRs are essential at a time where everyday objects like electronics but also furniture and insulation materials, are highly flammable.

The importance of effective legislation

- We need effective legislation to regulate flame retardants whilst enabling producers to meet high fire safety standards.
- The European Union's REACH regulation is a good example of effective legislation that uses risk-based assessments to determine whether chemicals, such as flame retardants, are safe to use.
- Risk-based assessments are key to keeping people safe as they are based on the uses and exposure of flame retardants, rather than hazard-based approaches which could lead to flawed conclusions.

Why do we need BFRs?



1. To achieve fire safety standards without compromising performance.

Alternative flame retardants simply can't match BFR's performance and could compromise standards of other products. One of the US' largest Electrical and Electronic equipment producers claims that alternatives fail to meet performance standards, which could adversely affect their product performance and consumers.¹



2. To protect supply chains and ensure competitive pricing.

BFRs are already established into complex supply chains, providing industry-leading flame retardant properties, helping to ensure competitive pricing, and providing consumers with safe and affordable products.



3. To avoid unintended consequences as a result of restriction.

As BFRs are extremely effective flame retardants and used widely, restricting them could have consequences further than just compromising performance standards, damaging supply chains or diminishing competitive pricing:

- A restriction on BFRs could negatively impact the availability of recycled materials, such as plastics, as those containing BFRs are easily sorted.
- A restriction of BFRs could lead to regrettable substitution, meaning a potential substitute could turn out to be more damaging than the original.
- A restriction of some BFRs could stigmatize the use of other BFRs which perform a vital role in meeting fire safety standards.



7+ YEARS

The time required to recertify alternative cable parts to replace BFRs, causing major supply chain disruptions and additional costs.

BFRs are one of the only flame retardants that:

- Achieve required flame retardancy standards in the most demanding applications.
- Do not adversely affect other aspects of materials to the extent that flame retarded material can no longer achieve mandatory performance standards (e.g mechanical strength or insulating properties).
- Are easy to handle within industrial manufacturing process (e.g injection moulding).



22-55%

Increase in usage required for the same level of protection, if leading general-purpose flame retardant, DBDPE, were to be replaced. This would lead to notable rises in manufacturing costs and diminish market competitiveness.

*1. Submission of Lutron Electronics to Washington State's Safer Products Reporting and Restriction Requirement (28/01/22)

About BSEF

BSEF, The International Bromine Council, represents the bromine technology industry globally. It provides information on the benefits of bromine and bromine technologies both for society and the economy. BSEF also serves to support its members and market organizations in their engagement with policymakers and regulatory authorities. The members of BSEF are Albemarle Corporation, ICL Industrial Products, LANXESS, Tosoh, Shandong Haiwang, Everkem and International Antimony Association.

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