

## Furniture & Rugs

Upholstered furniture in classrooms is not recommended. Flammability and sanitation are the major issues. Let's consider sanitation first. Upholstered furniture can harbor a multitude of problems such as molds, mildews, allergens, bacteria, biological contaminants, lice, insects, and bedbugs. This can easily lead to the transfer from student to student. It's impossible to eliminate these contaminants with cleaning methods. Professional cleaning and decontamination on a regular basis is required in order to eliminate and control these contaminants. Second, there is the fire issue. Residential upholstered furniture was never intended to serve in an educational occupancy.

The standards for educational occupancy are much higher than residential use. For residential upholstered furniture to be used in an educational occupancy, it must be professionally treated with an UL/FM approved fire retardant. To achieve these requirements can be time consuming and costly. In addition, with or without proper documentation, local fire officials may still require its removal.

- Newly introduced upholstered furniture shall be reviewed to meet the requirements and standards set forth by NYS Fire Code, Building Code, NFPA, ASTM, and other standards adopted.
- The components of the upholstered furniture shall meet the requirements for Class I when tested in accordance with NFPA 260.
- Heat release rate: Newly introduced upholstered furniture shall have limited rates of heat release when tested in accordance with ASTM E 1537 or California Technical Bulletin 133, as follows:
  - The peak rate of heat release for the single upholstered furniture item shall not exceed 80KW.
    - Exception: Upholstered furniture in rooms or spaces protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system installed in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1.
  - The total energy release by the single upholstered furniture item during the first 10 minutes of the test shall not exceed 25 megajoules (MJ).
    - Exception: Upholstered furniture in rooms or spaces protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system installation.
- Identification: Upholstered furniture shall bear the label of an approved agency, confirming compliance with the requirements

Since it is technically unfeasible and costly to upgrade certain items to those stringent standards, they cannot be allowed. Before a rug or carpet is purchased or donated for use in school space, proof of its fire resistance rating must be presented with the purchase documentation. The same procedure must be followed for upholstered furniture such as chairs, sofas, etc.

If you have any doubts about what defines rugs or furniture, please call (914) 422-2050 before you purchase an item.