How to read an upholstery *fire test report*

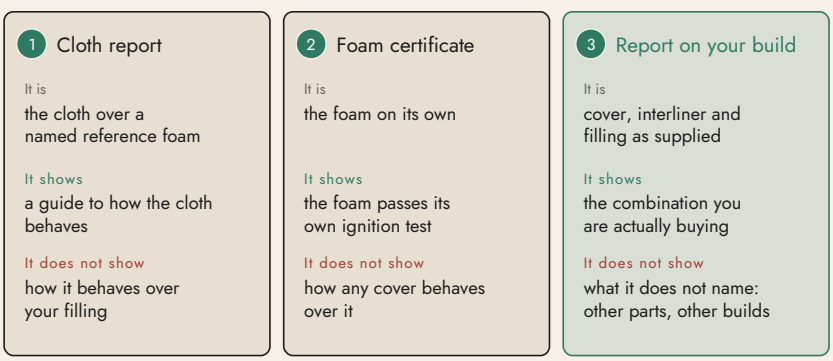
How to compare a fire test report with your build sheet, and what to do when it does not cover your piece.

Compliance guidance. This is guidance, not legal or fire safety advice. It rests on the FIRA guide compiled with the British Furniture Confederation (2010, updated 2011), read on 5 November 2026, and on BSI's public scope text. The British Standards were not read, and the guide says the final interpretation of the regulations rests with the courts. The hazard category comes from the Responsible Person, and a fire safety consultant or the test house should settle any doubtful report.

AT A GLANCE

The report says	Your build sheet says	Does it cover your piece?	Guide
Laboratory named; scope of accreditation not shown	Accredited for the test named (BS EN ISO 17025 or an equivalent)	Ask. The guide says the laboratory must be accredited for the specified tests	8.4
Dated [14] months ago	A date limit set in the specification	Ask for a newer one. Authorities normally expect an accredited certificate no more than a year old, less for larger runs	A1.3
BS 7176 [Medium Hazard]: sources 0, 1 and 5, a result for each	BS 7176 Medium Hazard, in writing from the Responsible Person	Matches, if the other lines do too	A1.1
Cloth [A], a different weave	Cloth [A], weave [x]	Does not cover. A change of cover other than colour is a new model	A1.3
Cloth tested over a 35 kg/m³ reference foam	A different foam, or a feather wrap	Does not cover. Tests of the real composite are advised	7.2.2
Seat composite only	Seat, back and arms with different fillings	Does not cover the back and arms: each composite needs its own test	A1.1
No water soak recorded	A treated or back-coated cover	Ask. Treated covers are water soaked before testing	A1.2
A foam certificate	A finished seat	Does not cover. It shows the foam passes its own ignition test, not the composite	7.2.3

An invented set of lines. 'Guide' is the section of the FIRA and British Furniture Confederation guide (2010, updated 2011). The verdicts are our reading of what the guide says. Our fire documentation matrix has the full list of nine checks.



Three documents that are often mistaken for one another. Schematic; from the FIRA and British Furniture Confederation guide, 7.2.2, 7.2.3 and A1.1. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

WHEN THE REPORT DOES NOT COVER YOUR PIECE

- Ask which tested composite your build matches, in writing, with the full report.
- Change to a composite the supplier already holds a report for, and re-approve the sample.
- Test the actual composite. The sources give no time or cost.
- Do not lower the level to fit the report: the Responsible Person sets it. Do not accept an assurance without a report.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

COMPOSITE RECORD AND TEST REPORTS

Before production [supplier] provides, for each upholstered item, a composite record (cover reference, weave and finish; interliner; filling type, grade and producer for the seat, back and arms separately; any treatment or back-coating; washable or dry-clean) and a test report for each composite listed, from a laboratory accredited for the methods used (UKAS or equivalent), to [BS 7176:2007+A1:2011 / current edition] [Medium] Hazard. The report's description of the specimen is identical to the composite record. Reports older than [12] months, abbreviated reports and certificates for the cloth or the foam alone are not accepted.

CLOTH SUPPLIED BY THE DESIGNER OR CLIENT

Where [designer / client] supplies the cover, [designer / client] provides the cloth's test report naming the filling it was tested over. [Supplier] confirms in writing that the production filling is the same [foam grade, density and producer], or has the actual composite tested before the cloth is cut.

DESIGNER'S CHECK AND THE LEVEL

[Supplier] holds the hazard category set in writing by [Responsible Person or adviser] on [date] before quoting. Before approving an item [designer] checks each report line by line against the composite record and records the result on [schedule ref]: laboratory and accreditation scope; date; level and ignition sources; cover; interliner; filling; parts tested; treatment. A report that does not match on any line is not accepted for that item. Where a line is not shown, [supplier] confirms it in writing within [ ] working days. A claim of compliance without a report is not accepted.

TERMS USED

Upholstery composite

The exact combination of cover, interliner and filling that was tested together. A fire certificate only applies to that combination, so changing the foam or cover can make it invalid.

Interliner

A thin fire-resistant layer placed between the cover and the filling so a seat passes the fire test even when the cover or foam would not alone. It changes how the cover sits, so it must be in the sample.

Composite record

Your own record of the cover, interliner, filling, treatment and parts of an item, written from the shop drawing, against which a test report is checked.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- FIRA and British Furniture Confederation, Fire safety of furniture and furnishings in the contract and non-domestic sectors (2010, updated 2011): re-read 5 Nov 2026: 6.1, 7.1.1, 7.2.1 to 7.2.3, 8.2 to 8.4, A1.1 to A1.4, Appendix 2 Q1 and Q2.
- BS 7176:2007+A1:2011; BS 5852:2006; BS EN 1021-1:2014 and -2:2014; BS 5651:1978; BS EN ISO/IEC 17025:2017: BSI listings read 5 Nov 2026: all Current (17025 under review). Not read; the guide cites the 2006 editions of BS EN 1021.
- Fire Safety Order 2005 (arts 3, 9); 1988 Regulations (reg 3(1)): legislation.gov.uk, read 5 Nov 2026; the Order applies in England and Wales.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/how-to-read-an-upholstery-fire-test-report. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.