Upholstery and furniture *glossary* for specifiers

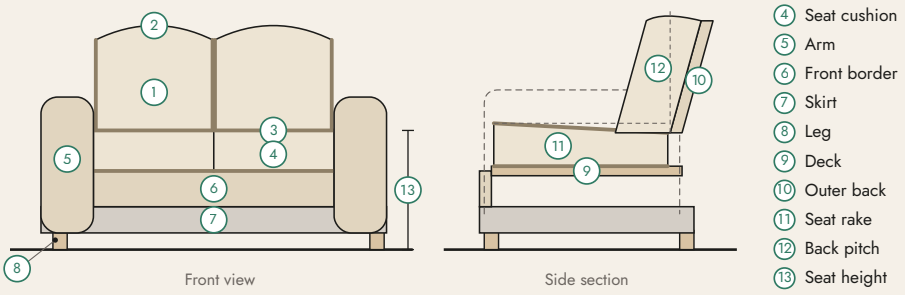
Plain definitions of the upholstery, cloth and fire words that cause trouble in a brief. The web glossary adds sources and notes.

AT A GLANCE

Word	What it can mean	Write instead
Contract grade	A use, a fabric weight, or a marketing label. No standard defines it.	The standard, the test and the result you require.
Crib 5	Trade shorthand for ignition source 5 in BS 5852, one part of BS 7176 Medium Hazard.	BS 7176 [Medium] hazard, composite tested, certificate on file.
Fire-retardant fabric	Inherently flame-retardant yarn, or a treated cloth that needs a water soak.	Which, with the certificate and the composite.
Border	The front band under the seat, a band round the back, or a printed border.	Front border or seat front, on the drawing.
Welt, piping	A cord in a seam. Two words, and workrooms use them differently.	Welt, [ ] mm cord, self-fabric.
Rake, pitch, recline	An angle from the vertical, the horizontal or between seat and back.	The angle and the datum, on the drawing.
Drop	The seat-to-table gap, or another distance.	Seat-to-top gap, [ ] mm.
Scatter back	Loose cushions against a low back, not a back with a few cushions added.	Back style, cushion count, fill and size.

The eight words that most often cause trouble in a brief.

THE PARTS OF A SOFA



Parts of a loose-back sofa, numbered as in the web glossary. Schematic, not to scale. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

THE TERMS IN BRIEF

Tight back

Cover fixed over padding on the frame; no cushion lifts out.

Loose back

Separate removable cushions against a fixed back.

Scatter back
Loose cushions against a low back that move about.

Tight seat; drop-in seat
Cover fixed over the deck; or a padded panel that lifts out of the rails.

Box; knife-edge cushion
Flat top and bottom with a side strip; or two panels meeting at one seam.

Welt (piping)
A cord sewn into a seam. The two words are used differently.

Crown
The slight rise at the middle of a cushion. Give it in mm.

Front border
The covered panel below the seat cushion. Never write 'border' alone.

Seat rake; back rake
Tilt of the seat from horizontal; lean of the back from vertical. Give the datum.

Finished seat height
Floor level to the top of the upholstered seat; loaded differs from unloaded.

COM / COL
Cloth or leather supplied by the client to the workshop.

Interliner
An extra fire-retardant layer between cover and filling.

Upholstery composite
The cover and filling tested together. A certificate applies to that composite.

Hazard category
Low, Medium, High or Very High, set by the Responsible Person.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

SEATING FORM
Sofa [model]: [loose back] with [2] back cushions on a covered fixed back; [tight seat / box seat cushions, [ ] mm welt]; [track / roll] arms; front border and [skirt, [ ] mm drop], to approved elevation [ref]. Crown [ ] mm on the approved sample. Finished seat height [ ] mm [loaded] from finished floor level. Seat rake and back rake [ ] and [ ] degrees, measured as on the drawing.

COVER AND FIRE EVIDENCE
Cover [COM / supplier cloth: name, colourway, batch], [ ] metres per piece, [repeat [ ] mm, half-drop; railroaded yes / no; pile direction [ ]]. Each upholstery composite (cover, interliner, filling) to meet BS 7176 [hazard category set by the Responsible Person], with a test report naming the composite. Cover [inherently flame-retardant / treated and water soaked].

TERMS USED

Trade usage
A word used in the trade with no standard behind it. Two workrooms can mean different things, so draw it and name it on the schedule.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- FIRA / BFC fire safety guide (2011 edition on FIRA's site) and FIRA leather types page (2022): read 6 Nov 2026: definitions, Tables 1, 2 and 5, Appendix 1, leather types. The guide pre-dates current editions of some standards.
- BS 7176:2007+A1:2011; BS 5852:2006; BS EN 16139:2025: BS 5852 current (BSI listing read); the other two current per search results. Texts not read; confirm editions.
- Approved Document M, Volume 2 (2015 with 2020 and 2024 amendments), England: knee recess; read 6 Nov 2026.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/upholstery-and-furniture-glossary. 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.