

# Debate on banning organohalogen flame retardants heats up

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Hundreds of everyday household items, from laptop computers to babies' high chairs, contain flame retardants to prevent the objects from catching fire. Recently, several groups petitioned a U.S. agency to ban flame retardants known as organohalogens, some of which can migrate out of household items. Others argue against blacklisting an entire class of compounds without further study, according to an article in *Chemical & Engineering News*.

Organohalogens are a group of chemicals that includes brominated or chlorinated phosphate esters, Senior Correspondent Cheryl Hogue writes. Scientists have linked some of these compounds to health concerns such as endocrine disruption, reproductive problems, cancer and developmental defects. Therefore, several health and environmental groups petitioned the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to ban four types of household goods containing organohalogens: children's products, except car seats; residential furniture; mattresses and mattress pads; and electronics casings. Meanwhile, manufacturers of flame retardants and electronics have argued against lumping all organohalogens, which have different properties and toxicities, together as a class.

To gain clarity on this issue, CPSC is turning to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Medicine for advice. A newly formed [flame retardants](#) committee will help the agency determine whether to consider all organohalogens as a single class, or whether they should be broken into subclasses for regulation. In addition, CPSC is establishing a

Chronic Hazard Advisory Panel of outside scientific experts to review the scientific data on organohalogen toxicity and exposure. The conclusions reached by these groups could have broad regulatory repercussions, Hogue writes.

**More information:** *Chemical & Engineering News*,  
[cen.acs.org/safety/consumer-sa ... halogen-flame/96/i38](https://cen.acs.org/safety/consumer-safety/organohalogen-flame-retardants/96/i38)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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