



## News Release

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### **NAFRA Responds to Recent NGO Claims About Flame Retardant Use in Electronics**

WASHINGTON (November 18, 2019) – *The American Chemistry Council's [North American Flame Retardant Alliance](#) (NAFRA) issued the following comments in response to publication of recent news articles focusing on misleading claims by non-government organizations (NGOs) about flame retardant use in electronics.*

“Product safety should be a shared objective of all stakeholders. Recent claims by several NGOs regarding the use of flame retardants in televisions are misleading and, if considered, could undermine product safety and increase the risk of fires for consumers.

“Flame retardants are used in electronics to provide essential fire safety protection. These substances are utilized in televisions, mobile phones, and a variety of appliances to help ensure overall product safety. Flame retardants in these products stop small ignition events from turning into larger fires — no ignition, no fire.

“Electronics present unique fire safety risks because they always have a potential ignition source (electricity/electrical power) and are commonly made of combustible materials. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that fire safety risk is still one of the key factors for product safety since inappropriately designed products can increase fire risk. Since 2017, nearly three million units for a variety of electronic products have been recalled due to fire hazards.<sup>i</sup>

“Despite efforts to improve fire safety during the past 40 years, it is still a real issue. According to the most recent data available from the National Fire Protection Association, fire departments responded to 357,000 home structure fires in 2017. These fires caused 2,630 fire deaths, 10,600 fire injuries, and more than \$13 billion in property damage/loss. On average, seven people died in a fire in a home per day during 2012 to 2016.

“The misinformed theory that all flame retardants are bad is demonstrably false and not supported by science. This basic fact has been recognized by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and government regulators around the world. Furthermore, while flame retardants are essential to product safety, they are in less than 5% of materials that compose electronics and electrical equipment, thus, electronics are not a significant source of exposure.<sup>ii</sup>

“Flame retardants include a broad range of substances with differing characteristics, formulations and intended uses, so it is not appropriate to group all these substances together or make broad

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conclusions on a wide range of substances. The selection of specific flame retardants for products should be based on the right choice for a specific application that ensures chemical safety while also taking into account overall product design, performance, and safety.

“Rather than attacking the use of all flame retardants as Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families has done, stakeholders, including manufacturers of electronic products, should focus on utilizing the appropriate safe chemistry — the right chemical for the right use.

“We strongly support efforts to ensure that appropriate chemicals are responsibly and safely used. When used properly, consumers need not worry about exposure to the chemical. Exposure to fire should be a larger concern.

Promoting chemical safety is a shared responsibility along the value chain, and also provides an opportunity for collaboration among chemical manufacturers, brands, retailers and others to develop safe, effective products that meet consumer needs. NAFRA is committed to collaborating with downstream users, retailers, brand owners, and government regulators to support the safe manufacture and use of consumer products and to reinforce the value flame retardants bring to fire safety.

For additional information about flame retardants, visit <https://flameretardants.americanchemistry.com>

<sup>i</sup>U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Product Recall Database.

<sup>ii</sup>United Nations University, 2008 Review of Directive 2002/96 on WEEE, Aug. 2007.

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<http://www.americanchemistry.com>

*The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care®; common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues; and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$553 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is among the largest exporters in the nation, accounting for ten percent of all U.S. goods exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.*

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