



## **SUMMARY OF THE COMMON FIELD TEST METHOD FOR ASSESSING THE FLAME RETARDANCY OF TEXTILES & PLASTIC FILMS AS USED IN TEMPORARY, DECORATIVE DRAPERIES**

The following field test method is based on methods specified by the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), the State of California Fire Marshal, and the City of New York Fire Department, among many others. For further information, please contact your local fire authorities or purchase the text of codes from [www.NFPA.org](http://www.NFPA.org).

Except in New York City, this field test method should be used only when laboratory test results are unavailable. In New York City, the field test is the only acceptable test.

This field test will give only guidance in the determination of whether a material has some resistance to burning, whether based on treatment or not. Rose Brand's experience is that the field test is particularly unreliable when testing synthetic materials, as these materials tend to melt and curl during ignition, thereby presenting misleading results, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively.

This field test is intended only for testing decorative or otherwise temporary fabrics and films for interior use, or for tenting or temporary coverings in an outdoor setting. The field test is not useful for testing or evaluating materials that will be permanently attached to building walls.

- Cut two representative samples of your fabric or film, each approximately 1" wide by 5" long.
- One cut sample's long side should be oriented with the vertical (height) of your fabric. The other sample should be oriented with the horizontal (width) of your fabric. In other words, the second piece is cut at a 90° angle to the first.
- Find a safe place for testing—the space and floor must be clear of burnable materials, particularly draperies, fabrics, paper, wood and sawdust. Also try to use a space free of drafts.
- Have a fire extinguisher close at hand, a source of water (sink), or a bucket of water.
- Suspend each sample vertically, the short edge at the bottom. Metal tongs or pliers work well to keep fingers out of the test.
- Using a standard, wooden kitchen match and apply the tip of the flame to the center of the bottom edge of the suspended sample. Hold the flame steadily under the edge of the fabric for 12 seconds. Only if no wooden match is available, use a lighter. Lighters burn at much hotter temperatures than wood—you probably do not want to increase the threshold that your fabric needs to satisfy.
- All fabrics burn to some extent. You should expect some burning. As the sample burns or chars (blackens) or melts, the tip of your flame remains stationary—do not move the flame you are holding up, as the material burns or melts away. Your match replaces the fixed position of a Bunsen burner from the lab—it does not move during testing.
- After 12 seconds, remove the match and do not blow it out in the direction of the sample.
- Continue to observe your specimen. Any flame on the specimen must self-extinguish within 2 seconds after you remove the match.
- Any glowing (afterglow) along the burnt edge of the fabric or any generation of smoke must stop completely within 20 seconds after the removal of the match.
- If either of these limits is exceeded, your material is not sufficiently flame resistant to be safe. You need to re-treat or replace with something better.
- If your first specimen passes, then repeat this test for the second specimen.
- Frequently, particularly with synthetics, you will find that one direction passes, but not the other. FR treatment or re-treatment or replacement is still in order, if only one specimen passes but not the other.

We recommend that your house manager or building manager keep a journal of when these tests are conducted, on which curtains, and what results were observed. Your local fire officials will inspect this journal during any annual or interim on-site inspection.

The proceeding is only intended as a way of guiding the inexperienced person in the field to a broad assessment of the condition of draperies or fabrics and films. Rose Brand recommends that you consult a professional from the discipline of fire safety and prevention whenever possible.

You are welcome to contact a sales representative at Rose Brand with questions and requests for further guidance.