



Why Fire Safety Matters

The International Technical Committee for the Prevention and Extinction of Fire reports that every year, 70.000 to 80.000 people are being killed in a fire.¹

Technological developments in the field of industry and consumer products (i.e. electronics, elevators, insulation) have led to growth in an increased risk of fire in buildings. As a result, today it is more imperative than ever to protect people's from fire risks. By, among other things, using flame retardants in electronics devices and building materials such as insulation material and fuse panels, fire safety can be increased.

In order to effectively reduce fires and their detrimental effects, it is crucial to improve prevention as well as protection. An important element to prevent a fire from rapidly developing or spreading is to delay the ignition period, allowing people more time to escape and for the fire brigade to arrive at the incident. Introducing fire safe furniture, electronics and building materials which prolong survival time, ensures that fewer people are killed or injured. Flame retardants are a well-proven tool to prevent fires from starting, or spreading. They can significantly delay ignition in the early stages of a fire when it can still be extinguished, or occupants of a building can escape.

Many countries in the world are increasing their fire safety standards, enforced through codes and regulations, following tragic fire incidents. There are dozens of internationally recognised standards such as the ISO standards relating to fire resistance of elements of building construction² which, along with effective regulations, ensure that consumer products offer a good level of protection from fires.

In the tragic fire of the nightclub *Kiss* of 27 January 2013 in Santa Maria, 241 people were killed and 623 other injured. According to the ongoing police investigation, the *Kiss* had deficiencies as regards to a number of fire safety requirements³. BSEF members are deeply moved by this terrible tragedy and regret that better fire safety measures that would have prevented hundreds of people to die or to be badly injured had not been put in place.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/presentations/21-02/ctif.pdf

² http://www.iso.org/iso/home/search.htm?qt=fire&published=on&active_tab=standards&sort_by=rel

³ <http://g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2013/03/policia-divulga-video-que-mostra-inicio-do-incendio-na-kiss-veja.html>