

NFPA 272
Standard
Method of Test
for Heat and
Visible Smoke
Release Rates
for Upholstered
Furniture
Components or
Composites and
Mattresses Using
an Oxygen
Consumption
Calorimeter
1999 Edition



National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, PO Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101
An International Codes and Standards Organization

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NFPA 272

Standard Method of Test for

Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Upholstered Furniture Components or Composites and Mattresses Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter

1999 Edition

This edition of NFPA 272, *Standard Method of Test for Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Upholstered Furniture Components or Composites and Mattresses Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Fire Tests and acted on by the National Fire Protection Association, Inc., at its Fall Meeting held November 16–18, 1998, in Atlanta, GA. It was issued by the Standards Council on January 15, 1999, with an effective date of February 4, 1999.

This edition of NFPA 272 was approved as an American National Standard on February 4, 1999.

Origin and Development of NFPA 272

In 1998 (F98) NFPA 264A was renumbered as NFPA 272 to coordinate a family of documents that will be relying on NFPA 271 as the base document for specifics on the test apparatus, calibration, and test procedure. The concept is to develop specific documents such as NFPA 272, which provides criteria for the specimen preparation for upholstered furniture components and mattresses.

The original 1990 edition of NFPA 264A was based on the methods of measuring rates of heat release using an oxygen consumption calorimeter developed at the National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology) by V. Babrauskas et al. It addressed only upholstered furniture and mattresses. The 1994 edition of NFPA 264A was a reconfirmation of the original document, with minor editorial changes, because the methods of measuring rates of heat release were still being used within the industry in areas such as product development. In testing of other various materials, a new document, NFPA 264, *Standard Method of Test for Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Materials and Products Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter*, was developed. The NFPA 264 document was closely related to and derived from NFPA 264A.

The 1999 edition of NFPA 272 incorporates updated provisions for specimen preparation as used in current testing practices. Chapter 6 on calculations has been updated and revised to include the measurement of smoke obscuration.

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NFPA 272

Standard Method of Test for

Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Upholstered Furniture Components or Composites and Mattresses Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter

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NOTICE: An asterisk (*) following the number or letter designating a paragraph indicates that explanatory material on the paragraph can be found in Appendix A.

Information on referenced publications can be found in Chapter 8 and Appendix C.

Chapter 1 General

1-1 Scope.

1-1.1 This test method shall be used to determine the ignitability and the release rates of heat from components or composite structures of upholstered furniture and mattresses using an oxygen consumption calorimeter.

1-1.2 This test method provides for radiant thermal exposure of a horizontally oriented specimen using an external igniter.

1-1.3 Radiant exposure shall be maintained at a constant rate of 35 kW/m² to determine time to sustained flaming, rate of heat release (kW/m²), and effective heat of combustion (MJ/kg).

1-1.4 The rate of heat release shall be determined by measurement of oxygen consumption as determined by the level of oxygen concentration and the flow rate in the combustion product stream. The effective heat of combustion shall be determined from a concomitant measurement of specimen mass loss rate, in combination with the heat release rate.

1-1.5 The testing shall be done on bench-scale specimens combining the furniture or mattress cover fabrics and padding.

1-1.6 This standard shall not purport to address all safety problems associated with use of the equipment. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and to determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

1-2 Significance and Use.

1-2.1* This test method shall be used to determine the time to ignition and heat release rates of materials and composites exposed to a prescribed heat flux.

1-2.2 Quantitative heat release measurements provide information that shall be permitted to be used in the design of upholstery and mattress products and in product development.

1-2.3 Release rate measurements are a source of useful information for product development. They provide a quantitative measure of specific changes in fire performance caused by product modifications.

1-2.4 Test Limitations. The test data shall be permitted to have limited validity in the following situations:

(a) When explosive spalling occurs

(b) When the specimen swells sufficiently, prior to ignition, to cause it to touch the spark plug, or if it swells up to the plane of the heater base during combustion

1-3 Summary of Test Method.

1-3.1 This test method is based on the observation that, generally, the net heat of combustion is directly related to the amount of oxygen required for combustion. Approximately 13.1 × 10³ kJ of heat are released per 1 kg of oxygen consumed. Specimens in the test are burned in ambient air conditions while being subjected to a prescribed external heat flux of 35 kW/m².

1-3.2 The rate of heat release shall be determined by measurement of the oxygen consumption, as determined by the oxygen concentration and the flow rate in the combustion product stream.

1-3.3 The primary measurements shall be of oxygen concentration and exhaust gas flow rate. Additional measurements shall be permitted to include the mass loss rate of the specimen, the time to sustained flaming, the effective heat of combustion, and other measurements as required in the relevant material or performance standard. Ignitability shall be determined as the measure of the time from initial exposure to time of sustained flaming.

1-4 Definitions and Terms.

Effective Heat of Combustion. The measured heat release divided by the mass loss for a specified time period.

Heating Flux. The incident radiant heat flux imposed externally from the heater on the specimen at the initiation of the test.

Heat Release Rate. The heat evolved from the specimen, per unit of time.

Ignitability. The propensity for ignition, as measured by the time to sustained flaming, in seconds, at a specified heating flux.

Net Heat of Combustion. The oxygen bomb calorimeter value for the heat of combustion, corrected for the gaseous state of water produced.

Orientation. The plane in which the exposed face of the specimen is located during testing (i.e., horizontally facing the heater).

Oxygen Consumption Principle. The expression of the relationship between the mass of oxygen consumed during combustion and the heat released.

Shall. Indicates a mandatory requirement.

Should. Indicates a recommendation or that which is advised but not required.

Smoke Obscuration. Reduction of light transmission by smoke, as measured by light attenuation.

Standard. A document, the main text of which contains only mandatory provisions using the word "shall" to indicate requirements and which is in a form generally suitable for mandatory reference by another standard or code or for adoption into law. Nonmandatory provisions shall be located in an appendix, footnote, or fine-print note and are not to be considered a part of the requirements of a standard.

Sustained Flaming. The existence of flame on or over the surface of the specimen for periods of at least 10 seconds.

Visible Smoke. The obscuration of transmitted light caused by combustion products released during the test.

2-2 Specific. Test apparatus shall be constructed in accordance with Chapter 2, Test Apparatus, of NFPA 271, *Standard Method of Test for Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Materials and Products Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter*.

Chapter 3 Calibration of Equipment

3-1 Calibration. The equipment shall be calibrated in accordance with Chapter 3, Calibration of Equipment, of NFPA 271, *Standard Method of Test for Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Materials and Products Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter*.

Chapter 4 Test Specimens

4-1 Test Specimens. Test specimens shall be prepared in accordance with Section 4-2, Method A, or Section 4-3, Method B.

4-2* Method A. Equipment and supplies for test specimen preparation for Method A shall be as specified in the following sections.

4-2.1 Cutting Equipment. Foams shall be cut with a band saw. A foam-cutting blade shall be used. This blade shall have no teeth and shall have a wavy scallop to the edge. The blade shall be well sharpened. No silicones or other oils shall be applied to lubricate the blade. Lubrication shall be solely with graphite or molybdenum compounds. The band saw blade shall make a straight and true cut of the foam. The blade guide shall be set no higher than 12 mm above the stock to be cut.

4-2.2* Forming Blocks. Forming blocks shall be made in dimensions of 98 mm × 98 mm × 50 mm. Each of these dimensions shall be controlled to within 0.5 mm. A dense wood shall be used as the material for the forming blocks. Only fully kiln-dried timber shall be used for making the forming blocks. All surfaces shall be cut straight and true and shall be smooth. The edges shall not be rounded, but the corners shall be slightly rounded. Blocks shall be permitted to be lacquered with an acrylic lacquer to ensure a hard, smooth, stable surface. A minimum of 12 blocks shall be made to permit a number of specimens to be prepared at the same time.

4-2.3* Adhesive. The adhesive shall be low in flammability. It shall have suitable holding power to permit the insertion of the resilient padding and to stay in place until the testing is performed (i.e., through the required conditioning) and during the flammability test procedure. For the latter, the glued portions of the fabric shall neither flame excessively nor retard burning.

4-2.4* Adhesive Application. The method of adhesive application shall be in accordance with the particular adhesive selected.

4-2.5 Adhesive Checking. To test the efficiency of an adhesive, a small amount of it shall be applied on two small pieces of the fabric or interliner to be used. The adhesive shall be allowed to dry a minimum of 12 hours and then an attempt shall be made to tear the fabric pieces from one another. To be acceptable, the glued pieces shall not be able to be separated without tearing the fabric.

4-2.6* Tape. Masking tape or other tape with adhesive shall be permitted to be used to assist in assembling the test composites.

4-2.7* Aluminum Foil. Aluminum foil that is 0.03 mm to 0.04 mm thick shall be used.

4-2.8 Basic preparation of specimens shall be as detailed in the following sections.

4-2.8.1 These basic instructions shall pertain to specimens that are comprised of only a single layer of fabric over a single layer of resilient padding. The same instructions shall apply to specimens where an interliner is laminated onto the back of the fabric. In the latter case, the fabric/interliner combination shall simply be treated as a fabric alone. For specimens that use multiple padding layers, separate interliner layers, and other more specialized constructions, supplemental instructions are given in 4-2.11.

4-2.8.2* Cutting of Resilient Padding Blocks. Each resilient padding block shall be cut square, with 90-degree corners and face dimensions of 102.5 mm ± 0.5 mm × 102.5 mm ± 0.5 mm. The thickness of the resilient padding block shall be 50 mm, when a single layer of resilient padding is the only padding material used in the composite.

4-2.8.3* Forming Resilient Padding Blocks. Each batch of resilient padding specimens prepared shall be checked for mass. There shall be as a minimum three replicate tests performed for each specimen type. Therefore, once three blocks of resilient padding have been cut, the mass shall be determined. No block shall have a mass of more than 105% of the mean of the three masses, nor a mass of less than 95%. If such a difference occurs, additional blocks shall be cut and the mass determined. The preparation of composites shall not start until three blocks of resilient padding that conform to the above 5% deviation limit have been obtained. The blocks accepted shall be marked, so as to be traceable. The mass of each block of resilient padding shall be recorded along with the identification marks of the blocks. The mass of resilient padding shall be reported in the test report along with other information about this test run.

4-2.8.4* Fabric Cutting. First, a square of 200 mm × 200 mm shall be cut. Fabrics shall not be cut on the bias.

4-2.8.5* For cone calorimeter results to be repeatable, fabric for the different replicates shall show uniformity. When fabric material is obtained directly from a bolt of cloth, specimens shall not be cut any closer than 10 cm to 12 cm to the selvedge.

4-2.8.6 To assist in verifying that uniform specimens have been cut, each set of fabric specimens that has been cut to the 200 mm × 200 mm size shall be checked for mass. Once three replicate pieces have been cut, the mass shall be determined. None of the pieces shall have a mass of more than 105% of the mean of the three, nor a mass of less than 95%. If such a difference occurs, the pieces shall be checked to see whether any of them have been cut oversized. The pieces shall be trimmed if oversize is found. If the cause of variation is not due to oversized pieces, then additional fabric pieces shall be cut and the mass determined.

4-2.8.7 If fabrics cannot be prepared to within the 5% deviation limit, then the fabric masses and mass range of the specimen shall be noted. The fabric for each specimen shall continue to be cut to the shape indicated in Figure 4.2.8.7. All given dimensions shall be controlled according to the tolerances given in the figure (± 0.5 mm). The one essential dimension given in the figure shall be maintained. The 95 mm and 102 mm dimensions shall be checked both before and after

cutting. When a fabric having thick yarns is cut, cutting shall stop outside the "102 mm dimension" when a yarn is reached. The yarn shall not be cut through if the resulting dimension will be smaller than 102 mm.

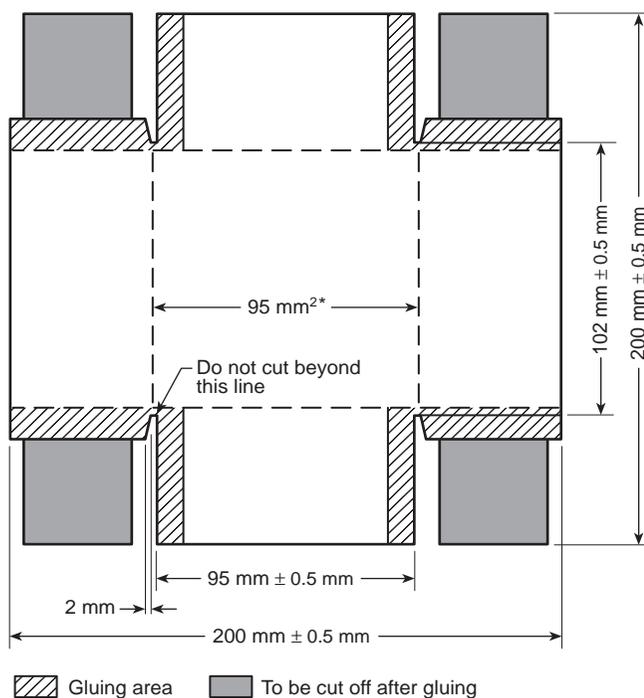


Figure 4-2.8.7 Fabric cutting shape.

4-2.9 Preparing the Fabric Shell.

4-2.9.1 The finished shell shall be assembled upside down upon a forming block. The fabric shall be placed upside down on the table. The block shall be placed on top so that it is well centered. The two short sides shall be bent up. Each of these sides shall be taped onto the top of the forming block in the center of the top edge. The long sides shall be bent up and taped to the top of the block. All four corners of the top face shall be checked to make sure that the fabric does not slip sideways on the block. The fabric shall be snug but not stretched.

4-2.9.2* For sensitive interliners, when paper strips are used, two strips shall be placed to form a cross under the fabric before the forming block is placed on top of it.

4-2.9.3 The gray area shown in Figure 4-2.8.7 shall be used for gripping and stretching the fabric around the corners of the forming block. After adhesive is applied to the first two corners, the block shall be turned to rest on the side just glued, and the adhesive shall be applied to the other two corners. If necessary, the fabric shall be taped over the gripping handles and around the corners in order to secure it in the shape of the forming block, or the block shall be wrapped with paper strips prior to sealing with masking tape.

4-2.9.4 The specimen shall be allowed to dry face down for 24 hours. The specimens shall not be stacked during drying. The brush or other utensils used to apply the adhesive shall be cleaned. The solvent and any excess adhesive shall be wiped off the brush with a piece of cloth before the next specimen is glued. After 24 hours have elapsed, all the pieces of masking

tape shall be removed, and the four flaps shall be trimmed down to the indicated offset mark so that only the 10-mm glued-down portion is left. Any fabric protruding below the bottom edge of the forming block shall be trimmed.

4-2.9.5 Preparing the Aluminum Foil. An oversized piece of aluminum foil shall be cut. If the foil has a shiny and a dull side, the shiny side shall be placed facing up. The actual specimen shall be slightly larger than the forming block, depending on the thicknesses of the fabric and interliner (if present). The aluminum foil shall be shaped for the final specimen according to either 4-2.9.6 or 4-2.9.7.

4-2.9.6 A fabric-covered forming block shall be used, encased with the fabric shell topside up. The block shall be placed on the aluminum foil. The block shall be held firmly in place and each side of the foil shall be pulled up to create the bottom folds. The corners shall be formed by holding the foil firmly in contact with the corner of the specimen. The corner of the foil shall be stretched and a 45-degree fold shall be made at each corner. Finally, the corners shall be pulled flat against the two sides of the specimen and all sides shall be patted down flat against the specimen. Figure 4-2.9.6 illustrates the folds that shall be made. The bottom edges and the corners shall be crisp, straight, and smooth. The forming block and its encasing fabric shell shall be removed from the foil cup.

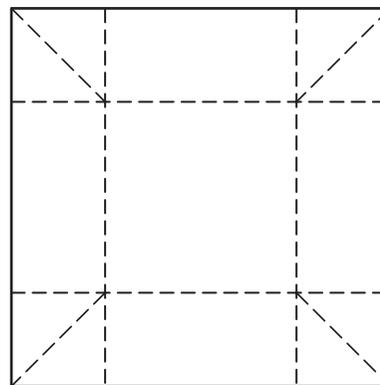


Figure 4-2.9.6 Folding of foil.

4-2.9.7 One forming block shall be set aside specifically for shaping the aluminum foil containers. Either another block shall be prepared with dimensions 102 mm × 102 mm (rather than 98 mm × 98 mm), or cardboard shall be glued or taped to the sides of a block to create one that is 102 mm × 102 mm. Then this new block shall be used for shaping the aluminum foil as described in 4-2.9.6.

4-2.10 Assembling the Shell of Resilient Padding and Fabric.

4-2.10.1* The forming block shall be removed from the fabric shell. The blocks of resilient padding shall be identified and tracked according to their masses, which have already been recorded. (See 4-2.8.3.)

4-2.10.2 The four corners of the selected resilient padding block shall be compressed slightly with the fingers and the block shall be inserted into the fabric shell. The resilient padding shall be inserted straight and verified. Each of the resilient padding block corners shall be checked to see that they line up exactly at the corners of the fabric shell. The top face shall be checked to ensure that the block of resilient padding is inserted fully into the shell and that there are no gaps. The

bottom of the resilient padding shall be checked to ensure that it is neatly lined up with the bottom edge of the fabric. If the specimen construction involves additional padding layers or different padding layers, similar steps shall be followed to ensure that a straight, taut assembly is made.

4-2.10.3 The specimen shall be carefully inspected. There shall be no buckles, warping, twisting, pulling, or similar conditions. The fabric shall be taut and there shall not be any air spaces between the fabric and the padding. If any such problems are discovered and cannot be corrected, the specimen shall be discarded. Each of the four sides shall be stapled as shown in Figure 4-2.10.3. The top face of the specimen shall be inspected. None of the four tabs shall overhang at the top of the specimen. If there is excess material, it shall be trimmed with scissors. No holes shall be made in the specimen while doing the trimming.

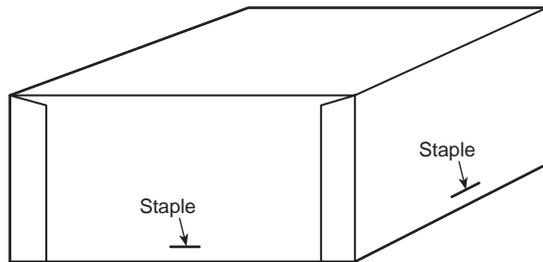


Figure 4-2.10.3 Assembled specimen.

4-2.10.4* **Assembling the Specimen and the Foil.** The assembled specimen shall be placed in the foil cup. The aluminum foil sides shall be patted down flush against the specimen. The top of the foil shall be cut to be flush with the top of the specimen. The corners of the aluminum foil shall be opened up slightly and the foil top shall be pulled about 20 mm away from the specimen.

4-2.10.5 Conditioning. The specimen shall be placed in a conditioning chamber for 24 hours. The specimen shall be conditioned to moisture equilibrium (constant mass) at an ambient temperature of $23^{\circ}\text{C} \pm 3^{\circ}\text{C}$ and a relative humidity of $50\% \pm 5\%$.

4-2.10.6* **Final Preparation.** The specimen shall be removed from the conditioning chamber. The specimen shall be checked to ensure that it is wrinkle-free, smooth, and visually completely uniform and symmetrical. If defects are found, the specimen shall be fixed or rejected. The specimen mass shall be determined with and without the aluminum foil. The aluminum foil sides shall be patted down flush against the specimen. The specimen shall be placed on the sample holder. The top of the specimen shall be gently pushed down against the ceramic fiber blanket.

4-2.11* Preparation of Specimens with Multiple Layers and Specialized Constructions.

4-2.11.1 Specimens that Use a Separate Interliner Layer. For these composites, the forming block shall be covered twice, first with the interliner, then with the fabric, as detailed in 4-2.11.1.1 and 4-2.11.1.2.

4-2.11.1.1* An alternate tape shall be selected or paper strips shall be used if needed. The interliner shall be cut using the same method as described for cutting fabrics. (See 4-2.8.4 to 4-2.8.7.) The interliner shall be glued up around the forming block using the same instructions as for fabrics. (See

4-2.9 to 4-2.9.4.) The specimen shall be left to dry for 24 hours. After 24 hours have elapsed, all the pieces of masking tape shall be removed. If there is any interliner protruding below the bottom edge of the forming block, such excess shall be trimmed off with scissors.

4-2.11.1.2 Once the forming block has been covered with interliner, the instructions in 4-2.8.4 and 4-2.9 for cutting and preparing the fabric shall be followed. To minimize thickness variations along the completed assembly, when the fabric is placed on top of the interliner, its orientation shall be turned by 90 degrees. Thus the two sides where the fabric flaps are glued shall not be lined up with the similar flaps on the interliner. Instead, two of the sides of the finished specimen shall contain doubled-up areas of fabric flaps, and the two other sides shall contain doubled-up areas of interliner flaps.

4-2.11.2 Specimens that Use a Polyester Fiber Topper Layer on Top of the Foam. The padding assembly shall be prepared according to 4-2.11.2.1 or 4-2.11.2.2, then 4-2.11.2.3.

4-2.11.2.1 If the uncompressed polyester fiber layer is 20 mm thick or less, it shall be compressed to one-half of that thickness in the final assembly. The foam block thickness shall then be the difference between 50 mm and one-half of the uncompressed thickness of the polyester fiber layer.

4-2.11.2.2 If the uncompressed polyester fiber layer is greater than 20 mm, the polyester fiber layer shall be cut back to give a 20 mm depth, and the preparation shall be continued as above. The polyester topper layer shall be placed on top of the foam block. This composite block shall be used wherever the general instructions refer to actions to be taken on the block of resilient padding.

4-2.11.2.3 During final assembly of the padding inside the fabric, the polyester plus foam composite block shall be compressed so as to have a total depth of 50 mm when the assembly is finished.

4-2.11.3 Specimens that Use More Than One Padding Layer (Except Polyester Fiber). Any padding layers thinner than 8 mm in their natural thickness shall be used. The thickness of each remaining layer (those greater than or equal to 8 mm in thickness) shall be proportioned so that its relative thickness in the remaining specimen depth (50 mm minus the thin layers) is in the same proportion as is found for those layers in the full-scale furniture article. Once the appropriate layers are prepared according to this instruction, they shall be used in exactly the same way as is the single forming block in 4-2.11.1.2.

4-2.11.4 Specimens from Furniture Items of Unusually Thin Construction.

4-2.11.4.1* For some furniture items, the total thickness of the entire padding layer is less than 50 mm, and the padding layer shall be tested in a 50 mm depth.

4-2.11.4.2 To comply with 4-2.11.4.1, two or more layers of padding shall be stacked together to achieve the required 50 mm depth. When testing specimens that represent known full-scale constructions, the test report shall clearly identify what the maximum thickness of padding found in the full-scale article was, if that thickness was less than 50 mm.

4-2.11.4.3 For specimens in which the padding comprises layers of several different materials, yet with a total thickness of less than 50 mm, each layer shall be laid up in an increased thickness so that the total padding thickness is 50 mm, and the ratios of individual layer thickness shall be maintained in the

same proportion as occurs in the full-scale article. The layers in the test specimen shall be laid up in the same order as the layers of the furniture item.

4-2.11.5 Specimens that Use Loose Filling Materials.

4-2.11.5.1 Loose filling materials shall include feathers, down, shredded foam and any other fillings that are poured into place rather than cut to size. Cone calorimeter samples for these shall be prepared by the manufacturer rather than by the testing laboratory. The manufacturer shall prepare a square pillow filled with the product. The square pillow shall be encased with the same fabric (not normally the outside upholstery fabric) that is used in the full-scale furniture article to hold together the loose filling material.

4-2.11.5.2 The outside dimensions of the square pillow casing shall be 98 mm × 98 mm × 48 mm. The fabric casing shall be prepared from two pieces. The top piece shall be cut slightly larger than 200 mm × 200 mm. The exact dimensions shall depend on the needs of the sewing technique. The casing top piece shall now be folded in a “waterfall” fold. (See Figure 4-2.11.5.2.) The four corners shall be tucked inside. The blind opening left at each corner shall then be sewn shut. The second fabric piece (not shown in the figure) shall be used to form the bottom. Its size shall be slightly larger than 100 mm × 100 mm.

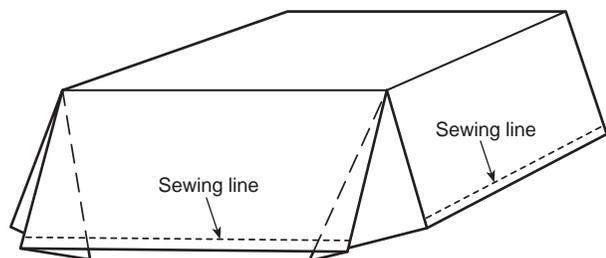


Figure 4-2.11.5.2 Folding of fabric for loose filling materials.

4-2.11.5.3 The bottom piece shall be sewn to the bottom edge of the top piece by sewing around all the four sides. Before the bottom is completely sewn shut, the inside of the casing shall be filled with the same density of material as will be used in the intended test article. The corners shall be filled evenly and any bulging of the top shall be minimized. It shall be permitted to have multilayer constructions, where the loose fill material does not comprise the entire depth of construction, with the remaining depth comprising foam, battings, or other non-loose materials. In such cases, the fabric casing shall still be constructed to the dimensions specified in 4-2.11.5.2. For such multilayer constructions, the casing shall be filled inside with depths of loose-fill and nonloose fill material, proportioned to the depths in the full-scale furniture article.

4-3 Method B.

4-3.1 Equipment and supplies for test specimen preparation for Method B shall be as described in the following paragraphs when quality of specimen is not required.

4-3.1.1 The construction of the test specimens shall reflect the actual construction used in the upholstered or mattress items.

4-3.1.2 The test specimen shall represent the padding and upholstery fabric materials, but not frame materials, welt cord, decking construction articles, or dust covers.

4-3.1.3 In all cases, the test specimen shall comprise the upholstery or mattress fabric and any intermediate layers found between the upholstery fabric and the padding that are 8 mm or less in thickness.

4-3.1.4 Where there is only one padding material, its thickness shall be such that the total specimen thickness, including fabric and intermediate layers, is 50 mm.

4-3.1.5 When the construction involves several material layers, the specimen shall comprise all of the types of layers sampled in the following manner.

4-3.1.5.1 Upholstery fabric or intermediate layers 8 mm thick or less shall be used in full thickness.

4-3.1.5.2 The depth taken up by the full-thickness layers shall be added up and subtracted from the 50 mm.

4-3.1.5.3 For the remaining depth, the remaining layers shall be proportioned in thickness such that the ratio of their thickness in the test specimen is the same as that in the full-scale furniture article.

4-3.2 Fabric Cutting.

4-3.2.1 The upholstery or mattress fabric and intermediate layers shall be cut to a size of 200 mm × 200 mm with a square 50 mm × 50 mm removed at each corner.

4-3.2.2 The length and width of the padding layers shall be slightly less than 100 mm, so that the fabric and intermediate layers can be folded over each of the four sides to produce a specimen measuring 100 mm × 100 mm.

4-3.2.3 The sides folded over shall be edge-stapled to the padding near the bottom of the specimen.

4-3.2.4 Care shall be taken to trim the fabric and intermediate layers so that they shall be even with the bottom of the test specimen.

4-3.2.5 The four sides and bottom of the finished test specimen shall be covered with aluminum foil 0.04 mm thick (shiny side in). A single sheet of aluminum foil, 200 mm × 200 mm, shall be used.

4-3.2.6 The corners shall be folded at a 45-degree angle, flush against the sides.

4-3.3 The specimen shall be conditioned to a moisture equilibrium (constant mass) at an ambient temperature of 23°C ± 3°C and relative humidity of 50% ± 5%.

Chapter 5 Test Procedure

5-1 Preparation. The test procedure shall be in accordance with Chapter 5, Test Procedure, of NFPA 271, *Standard Method of Test for Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Materials and Products Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter*.

5-2 Procedure.

5-2.1 When you are ready to test, the empty specimen holder shall be removed.

5-2.2 The radiation shield shall be inserted, and the specimen, within the horizontal holder, shall be positioned in place. The holder shall initially be at room temperature.

5-2.3 The radiation shield shall remain in place until load cell equilibrium, but for no longer than 10 sec total if the shield is

not water-cooled. Data collection shall be initiated upon removal of the radiation shield, which is the start of the test. The data collection intervals shall be 2 sec or less.

5-2.4 The ignition shall be conducted in the following sequence:

- (a) Start the ignition timer
- (b) Move the spark igniter into place
- (c) Turn on the power to the spark igniter

These steps shall be accomplished within 2 sec of the removal of the radiation shield.

5-2.5 The times at which flashing or transitory flaming occurs shall be recorded. When sustained flaming occurs, the time shall be recorded, the spark igniter shall be turned off, and the spark ignition shall then be removed. If the flame self-extinguishes in fewer than 60 sec after the spark has been turned off, the spark igniter shall be reinserted and the spark igniter shall be turned on. If flaming reoccurs, the test shall be stopped. The test data shall then be discarded, and the test shall then be repeated without removing the spark igniter until the entire test is completed. These events shall be included in the test report.

5-2.6 Data shall be collected until 2 min after any flaming or other signs of combustion cease, until the average mass loss over a 1-min period has dropped below 150 g/m^2 , or until 20 min have elapsed, whichever occurs first.

5-2.7 The specimen holder shall be removed.

5-2.8 The empty specimen holder shall be replaced.

5-2.9 After the start of the test, if the specimen does not ignite within 15 min, it shall be removed and discarded unless the specimen is showing signs of heat evolution.

5-2.10 Unless otherwise specified in the material or performance standard, three determinations shall be made and reported, as specified in Chapter 7. The 180-sec mean heat release rate readings shall be compared for the three specimens. If any of these mean readings differs by more than 10% from the average of the three readings, then an additional set of three specimens shall be tested. In such cases, the averages for the set of six readings shall be reported.

5-3 Safety Precautions.

5-3.1 The test procedures involve high temperatures and combustion processes. Therefore, hazards exist for burns, ignition of extraneous objects or clothing, and inhalation of combustion products. The operator shall use protective gloves for insertion and removal of test specimens. Neither the cone heater nor the associated fixtures shall be touched while hot except with the use of protective gloves.

5-3.2 The exhaust shall be checked for proper operation before testing and shall discharge into a building exhaust system with sufficient capacity. Provision shall be made for collecting and venting any combustion products that fail to be collected by the exhaust system of the apparatus.

Chapter 6 Calculations

6-1 Calibration Constant Using Methane. The methane calibration shall be performed prior to the day's testing to check for the proper operation of the instrument and to compensate

for minor changes in mass flow determination. The calibration constant, C , shall be determined from the following equation:

$$C = \frac{5.0}{1.10(12.54 \times 10^3)} \left(\frac{\sqrt{\Delta P}}{T_e} \right) \left[\frac{X_{O_2}^0 - X_{O_2}(t)}{1.105 - X_{O_2}(t)} \right]$$

where 5.0 corresponds to 5.0 kW of methane supplied, 12.54×10^3 is the ratio $\Delta H_c/r_0$ for methane, 1.10 is the ratio of oxygen to air molecular weight, and the other variables are as defined in Section 1-6.

6-2 Calculations for Test Specimen. The calculations in this section shall be used for various applications. The applicable material or performance standard shall be consulted for additional calculations.

6-2.1 Heat Release.

6-2.1.1 Before other calculations are performed, the oxygen analyzer time shift shall be determined by the following equation.

$$X_{O_2}(t) = X_{O_2}^1(t + t_d)$$

6-2.1.2 The heat release rate then shall be determined by the following equation.

$$\dot{q}(t) = \Delta \frac{H_c}{r_0} (1.10) C \sqrt{\frac{\Delta P}{T_e}} \left[\frac{X_{O_2}^0 - X_{O_2}}{1.105 - 1.5 X_{O_2}} \right]$$

6-2.1.3 The value of $\Delta H_c/r_0$ for the test specimen shall be set to equal $13.1 \times 10^3 \text{ kJ/kg}$, unless a more accurate value is known for the test material. The heat release rate per unit area shall be determined as follows:

$$\dot{q}''(t) = \frac{\dot{q}(t)}{A_s}$$

where $A_s = 0.01 \text{ m}^2$.

6-2.1.4 The total heat released during combustion, q'' , shall be determined by summation,

$$q'' = \sum_i \dot{q}''(t) \Delta t$$

where the summation begins with the first reading after the last negative rate of heat release reading that occurs at the beginning of the test and continues until the final reading recorded for the test.

6-2.2 Mass Loss Rate and Effective Heat of Combustion. The required mass loss rate, $-dm/dt$, shall be computed at each time interval using five-point numerical differentiation. The equations to be used shall be as follows:

For the first scan ($i = 0$),

$$-\left(\frac{dm}{dt} \right)_{i=0} = \frac{25m_0 - 48m_1 + 36m_2 - 16m_3 + 3m_4}{12\Delta t}$$

For the second scan ($i = 1$),

$$-\left(\frac{dm}{dt} \right)_{i=1} = \frac{3m_0 + 10m_1 - 18m_2 + 6m_3 - m_4}{12\Delta t}$$

For any scan for which $1 < i < n - 1$ (n = total number of scans),

$$\left(\frac{dm}{dt}\right)_i = \frac{-m_{i=2} + 8m_{i-1} - 8m_{i+1} + m_{i+2}}{12\Delta t}$$

For the next to the last scan ($i = n - 1$),

$$\left(\frac{dm}{dt}\right)_{i=n-1} = \frac{-10m_n - 3m_{n-1} + 18m_{n-2} - 6m_{n-3} + m_{n-4}}{12\Delta t}$$

For the last scan ($i = n$),

$$\left(\frac{dm}{dt}\right)_{i=n} = \frac{-25m_n + 48m_{n-1} - 36m_{n-2} + 16m_{n-3} - 3m_{n-4}}{12\Delta t}$$

The average effective heat of combustion shall be determined as follows, with the summation taken over the entire test length:

$$\Delta H_{c,eff} = \frac{\sum_i \dot{q}i(t)\Delta t}{m_i - m_f}$$

A time-varying value also shall be determined as follows:

$$\Delta H_{c,eff}(t) = \frac{\dot{q}i(t)}{\left(\frac{dm}{dt}\right)}$$

6-2.3 Smoke Obscuration. The extinction coefficient, k , shall be determined by the smoke meter electronics as follows:

$$k = \left(\frac{1}{L}\right) \ln\left(\frac{I_0}{I}\right)$$

6-3 Final Numbers.

6-3.1 The ignition time shall be determined and reported as “time to sustained flaming” in seconds.

6-3.2 Heat release rate, per unit area (kW/m^2) averaged over the first 180 sec after specimen ignition, shall be calculated and reported.

6-3.3 The effective heat of combustion (MJ/kg) average for the duration of the test period shall be calculated and reported. It shall be determined by dividing total heat released by the total specimen mass lost.

6-3.4 Reported Values. The values reported shall be the average for the three test replicates.

Chapter 7 Report of Results

7-1 Report. The test report shall contain the following information. The information to be reported shall be divided into data for each specimen tested and summary data for all specimens of a particular material or product tested.

7-2 All Specimens. The following shall be reported as a summary for all specimens of a particular material or product:

- Specimen identification or number
- Manufacturer or submitter
- Date of test

- Operator
- Composition or generic identification
- Details of preparation
- Number of replicate specimens tested (a minimum of three)

7-3 Each Specimen. The following information shall be included for each specimen:

- Specimen thickness
- Specimen mass
- Heating flux and exhaust system flow rate
- Time to sustained flaming(s)
- Heat release rate (per unit area) curve
- Average \dot{q}'' values for the first 180 sec after ignition
- Total heat released by the specimen
- Average $\Delta H_{c,eff}$ for entire test
- Peak $\Delta H_{c,eff}$
- Curve of $\Delta H_{c,eff}$ (optional)
- Mass remaining after test
- Sample mass loss
- Additional observations, if any
- Difficulties encountered in testing, if any

7-4 Averaged. The following values shall be averaged for all specimens:

- Time to sustained flaming (sec)
- Average heat release rate \dot{q}'' value (kW/m^2) for 180 sec after ignition
- Average heat of combustion ($\Delta H_{c,eff}$) (MJ/kg) the entire 20-min test

Chapter 8 Referenced Publications

8-1 The following documents or portions thereof are referenced within this standard as mandatory requirements and shall be considered part of the requirements of this standard. The edition indicated for each referenced mandatory document is the current edition as of the date of the NFPA issuance of this standard. Some of these mandatory documents might also be referenced in this standard for specific informational purposes and, therefore, are also listed in Appendix C.

8-1.1 NFPA Publication. National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101.

NFPA 271, *Standard Method of Test for Heat and Visible Smoke Release Rates for Materials and Products Using an Oxygen Consumption Calorimeter*, 1998 edition.

Appendix A Explanatory Material

Appendix A is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only. This appendix contains explanatory material, numbered to correspond with the applicable text paragraphs.

A-1-2.1 The rate of heat release at different flux exposure levels may also be determined using this test method. Mass loss, mass loss rate, production of smoke and other gases, carbon dioxide production, and carbon monoxide production may be observed and noted while using the test apparatus, but

none of the values of these observed conditions is considered a part of this method.

A-4-2 Additional information can be found in *Fire Testing of Furniture in the Cone Calorimeter — The CBUF Test Protocol*.

A-4-2.2 Specimen preparation rests crucially upon the proper use of forming blocks. Maple is an acceptable dense wood. It undergoes minimal dimensional changes when the humidity is changed. Do not use pine.

A-4-2.3 The following product information is provided for informational purposes only and has not been independently verified, certified, or endorsed by NFPA or any of its technical committees. Adhesives that are based on polychloroprene (Neoprene™), acrylic or water have been found suitable. Parabond™ A-1535 is a Neoprene, solvent-based adhesive (polychloroprene in methylene chloride solvent) has been found suitable. An acrylic, water-based adhesive, DAP Weldwood™ Hobby 'n Craft Glue, which is readily available in hardware and craft stores, has also been found suitable. The latter adhesive is often called white glue and has been proven adequate for many, but not all, fabrics and interliners tested by a U.S. testing laboratory. Other adhesives are also suitable, provided they meet the stated requirements.

A-4-2.4 Water-soluble adhesives are applied directly from the bottle and therefore do not require a brush. Likewise, any spillage is readily cleanable with water. This type of adhesive does not set as quickly as the solvent-based adhesives, which permits shifting the fabric as necessary to create a neat, tight package. However, the glued specimen has to be left overnight to ensure a good seal. On the other hand, polychloroprene-based adhesives are applied with a brush made of hog bristles or other stiff, coarse material. The brush has to be flat and cut square, with a width of 7 mm to 8 mm. A solvent compatible with the adhesive must be used for cleanup and storage of the brush. The solvent-based glues set up very quickly and do not permit any adjustment around the wood block.

A-4-2.6 Any type of tape that will adequately adhere to all fabrics and be easy to remove after completion of assembly is suitable for this purpose. Some interliners or fabrics will be damaged by direct application of masking tape to their surface, since removal results in tearing or marring the surface. For items susceptible to such damage, prepare strips of paper slightly wider than the width of the masking tape and long enough to reach all the way around the forming block. Then secure the paper strips with tape.

A-4-2.7 No other foil thickness should be used. It is especially important not to substitute a thicker foil. Commercially available heavy-duty foil has the appropriate thickness.

A-4-2.8.2 This size ensures that the resilient padding will be compressed during composite assembly, leading to tight, well-formed specimens. With a typical fabric thickness, this size will result in a total specimen thickness of approximately 50.9 mm, which is acceptable.

Some resilient paddings have a tendency to create high friction against the sawing table and the guide. To make a smooth cut by allowing the resilient padding to slide more easily, put a piece of paper between the resilient padding and the table/guide. Push the assembly of resilient padding and paper forward and allow the blade to cut through both the resilient padding and the paper.

A-4-2.8.3 The cone calorimeter test results will not be repeatable if the density of the resilient padding tested is not very closely controlled.

A-4-2.8.4 If the fabric weave is such that the yarns in the two directions do not lie at 90 degrees to each other, do not cut the sample along yarns in both directions because a skew specimen would result.

A-4-2.8.5 The cutting of the cloth should not be any closer than 10 cm to 12 cm to the selvedge because sometimes there are weaving or coating variations that occur closer to the selvedge.

A-4-2.9.2 Make the paper strips wider than the tape, but shorter, so that the tape can adhere to the wood block or to itself.

A-4-2.10.1 If bits of adhesive make the fabric stick to the block, use a chemist's spatula or a similar dull, knife-like device to loosen the corners. It is easiest to release the fabric by grabbing along the top edge of the fabric between the thumb and the index finger. Remove any adhesive that may remain stuck to the forming block.

A-4-2.10.4 The corners of the aluminum foil should be opened to allow good access of air into the conditioning chamber.

A-4-2.10.6 The top of the specimen should be pushed down to ensure that the bottom conforms smoothly to the same bottom conditions as will be seen during the testing. The specimen is now ready to be tested.

A-4-2.11 These instructions give additional details for preparation of those constructions that involve more than a single layer fabric and a single resilient padding layer. The instructions also provide for some materials that need specialized preparation techniques.

A-4-2.11.1.1 Some interliners are mechanically quite fragile. Avoid tearing them when the masking tape is stripped off. Test the tape to be used first to make sure that it can be smoothly pulled off the interliner without damage.

A-4-2.11.4.1 Examples include thinly padded chairs and innerspring mattresses.

Appendix B Precision and Bias

This appendix is not a part of the requirements of this NFPA document but is included for informational purposes only.

B-1 Precision. A series of interlaboratory tests for test Method A and test Method B were run. Method A was conducted using seven laboratories and five constructions. Method B was conducted using five laboratories and three constructions.

B-1.1 Tables B-1.1 (a) through (e) present the data for repeatability and reproducibility of the individual combinations used to examine precision of test specimen preparation Method A. The analysis was conducted following ISO 5725, *Accuracy (Trueness and Precision) of Measurement Methods and Results*. Stragglers were those entries with a probability of occurring between 1% and 5% based on their differences from the average, and they were identified and retained in the calculations. Outliers were those entries with a probability of occurring less than 1% based on their differences from the

average, and they were removed from the calculations. The abbreviations used for Tables B-1.1(a) through B-1.1(e) are as follows:

- TTI = time to ignition (sec)
- THR = total heat release (MJ/m²)
- $RHR_{Av} 60$ = average heat release rate for the period of 60 sec after ignition (kW/m²)
- $RHR_{Av} 180$ = average heat release rate for the period of 3 min after ignition (kW/m²)
- EHC = average effective heat of combustion (MJ/kg)
- SEA = average specific extinction area (m²/kg)
- m = average value
- r = repeatability
- R = reproducibility

Table B-1.1(a) Repeatability and Reproducibility for Combination 1, Method A

Variable	# Labs	m	r	R
TTI^1	7	16	2	4
$THR^{2,3,4}$	7	35	4	4
$RHR_{Av} 60$	7	159	34	83
$RHR_{Av} 180^3$	7	123	27	63
$EHC^{2,3}$	7	18.2	2.0	6.2
SEA^5	5	399	93	366

Combination 1: Backcoated acrylic pile fabric (546 g/m²) on non-fire-retarded high-resilient polyurethane foam (21 kg/m³).

- ¹Lab 7 was removed as an outlier for repeatability.
- ²Lab 3 was removed as an outlier for repeatability.
- ³Lab 4 was removed as an outlier for repeatability.
- ⁴Lab 7 was identified as a straggler for reproducibility.
- ⁵Lab 1 was removed as an outlier for repeatability.

Table B-1.1(b) Repeatability and Reproducibility for Combination 2, Method A

Variable	# Labs	m	r	R
TTI^1	7	13	3	4
$THR^{2,3}$	7	40	5	11
$RHR_{Av} 60$	7	116	16	47
$RHR_{Av} 180$	7	120	22	49
EHC	7	16.9	1.3	3.6
SEA	5	108	60	76

Combination 2: Fire-retarded cotton fabric (422 g/m²) on combination modified high-resilient foam (30 kg/m³).

- ¹Lab 7 was identified as a straggler for repeatability.
- ²Lab 2 was identified as a straggler for repeatability.
- ³Lab 6 was removed as an outlier for repeatability.

Table B-1.1(c) Repeatability and Reproducibility for Combination 3, Method A

Variable	# Labs	m	r	R
TTI	7	7	1	3
THR	7	58	4	8
$RHR_{Av} 60$	7	320	59	82
$RHR_{Av} 180$	7	292	43	61
EHC	7	30.5	2.4	5.0
SEA	5	449	91	112

Combination 3: Polypropylene fabric (264 g/m²) on non-fire-retarded high-resilient polyurethane foam (21 kg/m³).

Table B-1.1(d) Repeatability and Reproducibility for Combination 4, Method A

Variable	# Labs	m	r	R
TTI	7	14	3	7
THR	7	57	5	11
$RHR_{Av} 60$	7	222	25	78
$RHR_{Av} 180$	7	266	33	56
EHC	7	20.9	1.4	3.7
SEA	5	241	27	56

Combination 4: Wood fabric (432 g/m²) on combustion modified high-resilient foam (30 kg/m³).

Table B-1.1(e) Repeatability and Reproducibility for Combination 5, Method A

Variable	# Labs	m	r	R
TTI	7	15	2	11
THR^1	7	31	5	24
$RHR_{Av} 60$	7	137	19	136
$RHR_{Av} 180^2$	7	83	20	89
EHC	7	16.3	2.9	12.7
SEA	5	341	93	333

Combination 5: Backcoated acrylic pile fabric (546 g/m²) on non-fire-retarded high-resilient polyurethane foam (21 kg/m³) (as Combination 1), with an added Kevlar interliner (65 g/m²).

- ¹Lab 3 was removed as an outlier for repeatability.

B-1.2 Table B-1.2 presents the overall repeatability and reproducibility of the investigation for precision using test specimen preparation Method A. The constants a , b , A , and B correspond to the following linear regression equations:

$$r = a + bm \quad R = A + Bm$$

B-1.3 Figure B-1.3 shows a comparison of the results of an investigation where one of the laboratories (Lab 1) tested three test specimens it had prepared when using Method A