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Department of Consumer Affairs**

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**TECHNICAL BULLETIN 117-2013**

**Requirements, Test Procedure and Apparatus for Testing the  
Smolder Resistance of Materials Used in Upholstered Furniture**

**June 2013**

# REQUIREMENTS, TEST PROCEDURE AND APPARATUS FOR TESTING THE SMOLDER RESISTANCE OF MATERIALS USED IN UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE

## INTRODUCTION

The intent of this standard is to produce upholstered furniture which is safer from the hazards associated with smoldering ignition. This standard provides methods for smolder resistance of cover fabrics, barrier materials, resilient filling materials, and decking materials for use in upholstered furniture.

## A. SCOPE

- A.1 This is a fire-test-response standard.
- A.2 These test methods are designed for the assessment of the resistance of upholstered furniture component assemblies to combustion after exposure to smoldering cigarettes under specified conditions.
- A.3 The tests apply to upholstered furniture components - cover fabrics, barrier materials, resilient filling materials, and decking materials.
- A.4 The individual test methods and the materials to which they apply are as follows:
  - A.4.1 *Cover Fabric Test* - Applies to outer cover fabrics.
  - A.4.2 *Barrier Materials Test* - Applies to materials that are intended to serve as a barrier (interliner) between cover fabric and the resilient filling materials.
  - A.4.3 *Resilient Filling Material Test* – Applies to resilient filling materials used in upholstered seating furniture.
  - A.4.4 *Decking Material Test* – Applies to resilient materials used in the deck under loose cushions.

## B. REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

- B.1 ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup>: Standard Test Method for Cigarette Ignition Resistance of Components of Upholstered Furniture (Addendum 1)
- B.2 Federal Specification CCC-C-436-E, Cloth, Ticking, Twill, Cotton; Type I.
- B.3 AATCC Test Method 124-2011: Smoothness Appearance of Fabrics after Repeated Home Laundering

## C. TERMINOLOGY

- C.1 *Obvious ignition* - pronounced continuous and self-sustaining combustion of the test system accompanied by rapid generation of heat and smoke. It is a matter of operator judgment based upon experience in this type of operation.
- C.2 *Upholstery cover material* - the outermost layer of fabric or related material used to enclose the main support system or upholstery materials, or both, used in the furniture item.
- C.3 *Barrier (interliner) material* - the first layer of material (film, fabric, batting or pad) that lies under the cover fabric in order to reduce smoldering propensity of the seating furniture.
- C.4 *Resilient filling material* - the resilient filling material in the form of batting, pads or loose fills used or intended to be used in an article of upholstered furniture.
- C.5 *Deck* – in upholstered furniture, the upholstered support under the seat cushion in a loose seat construction.

## **D. SUMMARY OF TEST METHOD**

These test methods consist of several tests used to evaluate the cigarette ignition resistance of upholstery cover fabrics, barrier (interliner) materials, resilient filling materials, and decking materials used in the manufacture of upholstered furniture. Each test involves a miniature assembly consisting of the component to be tested along with other specified materials, mounted on a plywood mock-up that resembles a small chair seat and back. The assembly is exposed to a lighted cigarette as an ignition source.

## **E. SIGNIFICANCE AND USE**

- E.1 These test methods are intended to estimate the performance of upholstered furniture under conditions of exposure to a smoldering cigarette. This is accomplished by testing furniture component assemblies. However, interactions between components in production furniture are not necessarily predicted by component assembly testing.
- E.2 These test methods are not intended to measure the performance of upholstered furniture under conditions of open flame exposure and do not indicate whether the furniture will resist the propagation of flame under severe fire exposure or when tested in a manner that differs substantially from the test standard.
- E.3 The results obtained with a material component tested in mock-up, in accordance with these test methods, do not necessarily indicate the performance of the same material component in other geometrical configurations, such as in full size furniture.

## **F. TEST FACILITY AND HAZARDS**

The exhaust system and hazards are described in Annex A.

## **G. APPARATUS AND STANDARD TEST MATERIALS**

The apparatus and standard test materials are specified in Annex B and C.

## **H. CONDITIONING**

Condition test specimens and cigarettes prior to the test for a minimum of 24 hours at  $21^{\circ} \pm 3^{\circ} \text{C}$  ( $70^{\circ} \pm 5^{\circ} \text{F}$ ) and less than 55% relative humidity. If conditions in the test area are not the same as in the conditioning area, tests should begin within 10 minutes of removal of samples from conditioning area.

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## **SECTION 1: COVER FABRIC TEST**

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### **1.1 SCOPE**

This test method measures the tendency of upholstery cover fabrics to smolder and contribute to fire propagation, when subjected to a smoldering ignition source.

For cover fabrics that pass this section, the first layer of filling materials located below the cover fabric shall also meet the test requirements of section 3 of this test method.

## 1.2 TEST SPECIMEN

Prepare the test specimens as specified in ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 10).

## 1.3 TEST PROCEDURE

Follow the test procedures of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 11 – Steps 11.1 through 11.9) and the additional test procedures specified below:

- 1.3.1: Place the specimen assembly directly on the fiberglass board. If testing multiple specimens simultaneously, place the individual test specimens at least 6 inches (152 mm) apart to avoid heat transfers between specimens.
- 1.3.2: After completing test procedure step 11.6, the test operators shall start timers to record testing time.

## 1.4 PASS/FAIL CRITERIA

A material is considered to pass or fail based on the following criteria:

1. A single mock-up test specimen fails to meet the requirements of this test procedure if any of the following criteria occurs:
  - a) The mock-up test specimen continues to smolder after the 45 minute test duration;
  - b) A vertical char length (measured as specified in step 11.9 of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup>) of more than 1.8 inches (45 mm) develops on the cover fabric.
  - c) The mock-up test specimen transitions to open flaming.
2. The cover fabric passes the test if three initial mock-up specimens pass the test, i.e., the cigarettes burn their full length and the mock-ups are no longer smoldering.
3. If more than one initial specimen fails, the cover fabric fails the test.
4. If any one of the three initial specimens fails, repeat the test on additional three specimens.
5. If all three additional specimens pass the test, the cover fabric passes the test. If any one of the additional three specimens fails, the cover fabric fails the test.

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## SECTION 2. BARRIER MATERIALS TEST

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### 2.1 SCOPE

This test method measures the tendency of the barrier material to smolder after exposure to smoldering cigarettes under specified conditions.

Upholstery cover fabrics that fail the cover fabric test described in Section 1 can be used in upholstered furniture if a barrier (interliner) material that passes this test method is used. When a barrier is required, the barrier material must cover all sides and top of the seating cushion(s). Exceptions: Non-reversible and non-detachable seating cushions do not require the use of the barrier material on the underside of the seating cushion.

## 2.2 TEST SPECIMENS

- 2.2.1: Cut three specimens, each 8 by 8 in. (203 by 203 mm) for horizontal panels from the material to be tested, and three specimens, each 8 by 12 in. (203 by 305 mm), for vertical panels. Note: The test material measurements for the vertical panels are different than ASTM (Section 20 – step 20.1).
- 2.2.2: Cut three specimens, each 8 by 8 in. (203 by 203 mm), from the Standard Type II cover fabric for horizontal panels, and three specimens, each 8 by 15 in. (203 by 381 mm), for vertical panels. Note: The fabric measurements for the vertical panels are different than ASTM (Section 20 – step 20.2).

## 2.3 TEST PROCEDURE

### Prepare the test specimen as follows:

- 2.3.1 For horizontal panels, place a barrier specimen on an 8 by 5 by 2 in. (203 by 127 by 51 mm) polyurethane substrate. Fold the barrier around and under the polyurethane and fasten in place with pins. Place the 8 by 8 in. (203 by 203 mm) cover fabric over each barrier and fasten in place with pins.
- 2.3.2: For vertical panels, place a barrier specimen on an 8 by 8 by 2 in. (203 by 203 by 51 mm) polyurethane substrate. Place the 8 by 15 in. (203 by 381 mm) piece of cover fabric over each and fasten in place with pins. Note: The cover fabric measurement for the vertical panel is different than ASTM (Section 21 – step 21.2).

### Follow the test procedures of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 21 - Steps 21.3 through 21.9) and the additional test procedures specified below:

- 2.3.3: Place the specimen directly on the fiberglass board. If testing multiple specimens simultaneously, place the individual test specimens at least 6 inches (152 mm) apart to avoid heat transfers between specimens.
- 2.3.4: After completing test procedure step 21.6, the test operators shall start timers to record testing time.

## 2.4 PASS/FAIL CRITERIA

### A material is considered to pass or fail based on the following criteria:

1. A single mock-up test specimen fails to meet the requirements of this test procedure if any of the following criteria occurs:
  - a) The mock-up test specimen continues to smolder after the 45 minute test duration;
  - b) A vertical char length (measured as specified in step 21.9 of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup>) of more than 2 inches (51 mm) develops on the cover fabric.
  - c) The mock-up test specimen transitions to open flaming.
2. A barrier material passes the test if three initial mock-up specimens pass the test, i.e., the cigarettes burn their full length and the mock-ups are no longer smoldering.
3. If more than one initial specimen fails, the barrier material fails the test.

4. If any one of the three initial specimens fails, repeat the test on additional three specimens.
5. If all three additional specimens pass the test, the barrier material passes the test. If any one of the additional three specimens fails, the barrier material sample fails the test.

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### **SECTION 3. RESILIENT FILLING MATERIAL TEST**

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#### **3.1 SCOPE**

This test method measures the tendency of resilient filling materials to smolder and contribute to fire propagation, when covered with smolder resistant fabric and subjected to a smoldering ignition source. The materials covered by this test method include, but not limited to:

1. Resilient foams or other filling materials,
2. Batting of natural and man-made fibers,
3. Resilient pads of natural or man-made fibers.

Resilient filling materials that fail the test described in this section can be used in upholstered furniture if a barrier (interliner) material that passes Section 2 of this test method is used between the cover fabric and the filling materials.

#### **3.2 TEST SPECIMEN**

**Prepare the test specimen as specified in ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 16 - Steps 16.1 and 16.2) and as follows:**

- 3.2.1: Cut three specimens, each 8 by 8 in. (203 by 203 mm), from the Standard Type I cover fabric for horizontal panels, and three specimens, 8 by 15 in. (203 by 381 mm), for vertical panels. Note: The fabric measurements are different than ASTM (Section 16 – step 16.3).
- 3.2.2: If the test sample material is less than 2 in. (51 mm) thick, stack multiple layers to make up the required thickness.
- 3.2.3: If the inside filling material is less than ½ in. (12.7 mm) thick use multiple layers to make up a 1 in. (25.4 mm) thick specimen and combine with a 1 in. (25.4 mm) thick removable plywood panel to construct the 2 in. (51 mm) thick test specimen horizontal and vertical panels. The removable plywood panels shall rest on horizontal and vertical surfaces of the mock-up specimen holder.

Note: Thickness of the test materials shall be measured by a ruler or caliper without applying any compression or load to the material.

#### **3.3 TEST PROCEDURE**

**Follow the test procedures of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 17 – Steps 17.1 through 17.9) and the additional test procedures specified below:**

- 3.3.1: Place the specimen assembly directly on the fiberglass board. If testing multiple specimens simultaneously, place the individual test specimens at least 6 inches (152 mm) apart to avoid heat transfers between specimens.

- 3.3.2: The fabric shall overlap the top and bottom of the substrate and be stapled to the top backside as shown in Fig. C4. NOTE: This test specimen assembly is different than those specified in ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 17 – step 17.2).
- 3.3.3: After completing test procedure 17.6, the test operators shall start timers to record testing time.
- 3.3.4: Continue test until all evidence of combustion has ceased for at least 5 minutes.

### **3.4 PASS/FAIL CRITERIA**

**A material is considered to pass or fail based on the following criteria:**

1. A single mock-up test specimen fails to meet the requirements of this test procedure if any of the following criteria occurs:
  - a) The mock-up test specimen continues to smolder after the 45 minute test duration;
  - b) A vertical char length (measured as described in step 17.9 of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup>) of more than 1.5 inches (38 mm) develops on the cover fabric.
  - c) The mock-up test specimen transitions to open flaming.
2. The resilient filling material passes the test if three mock-up specimens pass the test.
3. If more than one specimen fails, the resilient filling material fails the test.
4. If any one of the three initial specimens fails, repeat the test on additional three specimens.
5. If all three additional specimens pass the test, the resilient filling material passes the test. If any one of the additional three specimens fails, the resilient filling material fails the test.

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## **SECTION 4. DECKING MATERIAL TEST**

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### **4.1 SCOPE**

This test method measures the tendency of decking materials to smolder and contribute to fire propagation, when subjected to a smoldering ignition source.

For decking materials that pass this section, the first layer of filling materials located below the decking material shall also meet the test requirements of Section 3 of this test method.

### **4.2 TEST SPECIMEN**

**Prepare the test specimen as specified in ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 18 - Steps 18.1 and 18.2).**

### **4.3 TEST PROCEDURE**

**Follow the test procedures of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup> (Section 19 – Steps 19.1 through 19.6) and the additional test procedures specified below:**

- 4.3.1: Place the specimen assembly directly on the fiberglass board. If testing multiple specimens simultaneously, place the individual test specimens at least 6 inches (152 mm) apart to avoid heat transfers between specimens.

4.3.2: After completing test procedure step 19.3, the test operators shall start timers to record testing time.

#### **4.4 PASS/FAIL CRITERIA**

**A material is considered to pass or fail based on the following criteria:**

1. A single mock-up test specimen fails to meet the requirements of this test procedure if any of the following criteria occurs:
  - a) The mock-up test specimen continues to smolder after the 45 minute test duration;
  - b) A char length (measured as specified in step 19.6 of ASTM E1353-08a<sup>e1</sup>) of more than 1.5 inches (38 mm) develops.
  - c) The mock-up test specimen transitions to open flaming.
2. The decking material passes the test if three initial mock-up specimens pass the test, i.e., the cigarettes burn their full length and the mock-ups are no longer smoldering.
3. If more than one initial specimen fails, the decking material fails the test.
4. If any one of the three initial specimens fails, repeat the test on additional three specimens.
5. If all three additional specimens pass the test, the decking material passes the test. If any one of the additional three specimens fails, the decking material fails the test.



## Annex A

### Test Facility, Exhaust System and Hazards

#### Test Facility/Exhaust System

The test area shall be a room with a volume greater than 20 m<sup>3</sup> (in order to contain sufficient oxygen for testing) or a smaller area equipped with inlet and extraction systems permitting the necessary flow of air. All smoldering tests shall be conducted under appropriate test hoods and/or test cabinets equipped with variable speed exhaust fans or other means of controlling the exhaust flow rates, such as dampers. Airflow rates shall be between 0.02 m/s and 0.2 m/s (4 and 40 ft/min), measured in the locality of the test specimen. Position specimen to provide adequate air around the test specimen without disturbing the burning behavior.

Note 1: These rates of airflow have been shown to provide adequate oxygen without physically disturbing the burning behavior of the ignition source or the specimen.

Note 2: A fume hood with air curtains across the face and zero air velocity at the test locations is recommended. Zero air velocity is indicated by an undisturbed vertical smoke plume of 6 in.

#### Hazards

- There are potential risks associated with running any fire test. It is essential that suitable precautions be taken, which include the provision of breathing apparatus and proper safety equipment.
- Products of combustion can be irritating and dangerous to test personnel. Test personnel must avoid exposure to smoke and gases produced during testing.
- Suitable means of fire extinguishment shall be at hand. When the termination point of the experiment has been reached, the fire is extinguished, if necessary, with carbon dioxide or water. Presence of a back-up fire extinguisher is recommended. It may be difficult to judge when all combustion in a test specimen has ceased due to potential smoldering or burning deep inside the specimen even after extinguishment. Care should be taken that specimens are disposed of only when completely inert.
- Warning - Even under the most carefully observed conditions, smoldering combustion can progress to a point where it cannot be readily extinguished. It is imperative that a test be discontinued as soon as continuing combustion has definitely occurred. Immediately wet the exposed area with a water spray from the water bottle, remove the charred or burned material, and immerse the material in a bucket of water. Ventilate the test area.

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## Annex B

### Standard Test Materials for Smolder Resistance of Cover Fabrics and Barrier Materials Used as Components in Upholstered Furniture.

**Ignition Source:** The standard ignition source shall be a non-filtered cigarette and be either the SRM 1196 (Standard Reference Material) or meet the following specifications:

**Table 1. Cigarette Specifications.**

Property	Value
Filter	None
Length	83 mm ± 2 mm
Mass	1.1 g ± 0.1 g
Packing Density	0.270 g/cm <sup>3</sup> ± 0.020 g/cm <sup>3</sup>
Circumference – for guidance only	Nominally 24.8 mm
Ignition Strength	70 PFLB to 95 PFLB

PFLB = Percentage of Full Length Burn

The cigarettes shall be conditioned for at least 24 hours at 70 ± 5 °F and less than 55% relative humidity prior to use.

The Bureau may certify other equivalent substitutes for the SRM 1196 as it deems appropriate.

**The Standard Polyurethane Foam Substrate:** The Standard Polyurethane Foam Substrate shall have the following specifications based on physical test methods described in ASTM-D3574-08:

**Open cell, polyether-based conventional flexible polyurethane foam produced using:**

Propylene oxide/ethylene oxide polyol with no ethylene oxide end capping with 80/20 TDI blend (No Natural Oil Polyol content); without the addition of fire retardant products, liquid or solid, or post-production FR treatment; without added anti-oxidant or foam stabilizer additives; without anti-microbial or anti-static additives; color: natural - no colorants or whitening additives; and crush foam to 90% after curing.

**Having the following physical properties:**

Density: 1.80 +/- 0.05 lb/ft<sup>3</sup> (28.0 - 29.6 kg/m<sup>3</sup>); Indentation Load Deflection (25% IFD): 27 to 33; Airflow: 3.5 to 4.0 cfm (ASTM D737 Frazier using 2" x 2" orifice plate or DOW instrument) - test airflow using crushed foam; Samples to be cut horizontally such that the thickness is perpendicular to the foam rise (see figure below). Cut from the top surface of the sample no less than 12" from top of bun, no less than 12" from the bottom of the bun, and no closer than 12" from bun sidewalls.

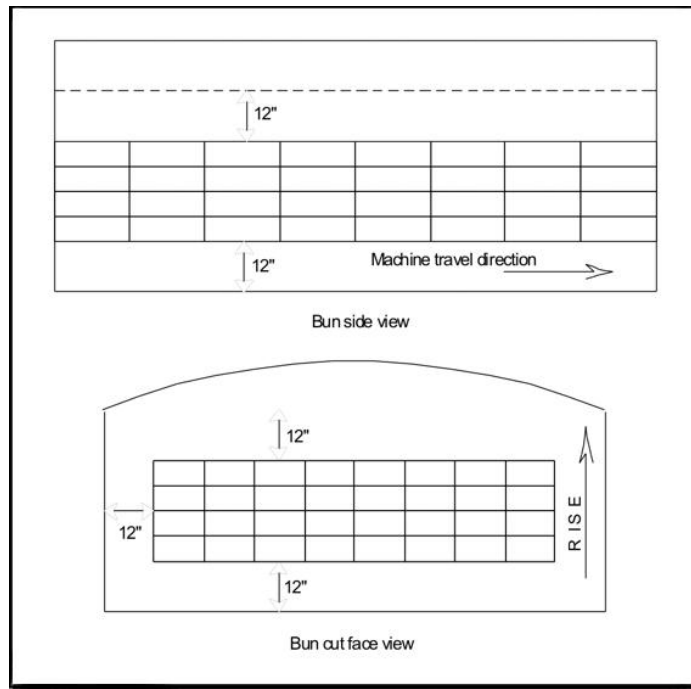


Figure A1: Cutting Diagrams for the Standard Polyurethane Foam

**Standard Type I Cover Fabric:** The Standard Type I cover fabric shall be 100 % cotton mattress ticking conforming to Fed. Spec. CCC-C-436-E. It shall be laundered and tumble-dried once before using.

**Standard Type II Cover Fabric:** The Standard Type II cover fabric shall have the following specifications:

FABRIC : Pattern 8500, COLOR : Beige, FIBER CONTENT : 100% Cotton Velvet,  
WEIGHT/LINEAL YD.: 14.5 oz., (54 inches), BACKCOATING: None

**Sheeting Material:** The sheeting material to cover the test cigarettes shall be 50% cotton/50% polyester or 100% cotton bed sheeting material weighing  $3.7 \pm 0.8$  oz/yd<sup>2</sup> ( $125 \pm 28$ g/m<sup>2</sup>). The material shall be laundered and tumble dried at least once before use. For testing, the sheeting material shall be cut into pieces approximately 5 by 5 in. (12.5 by 12.5 cm).

**Laundering Procedure:** Wash the test specimen in accordance with sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 of AATCC Test Method 124–2011. Dry the test specimen in accordance with section 8.3.1(A) of AATCC Test Method 124–2011.

## Annex C

### Specimen Holder (Mini Mockup Tester) and Decking Material Tester:

Figure C-1. Specimen Holder (Mini-Mock-up Tester) for Mock-up Smoldering Ignition Resistance Tests  
(Drawings Not to Scale)

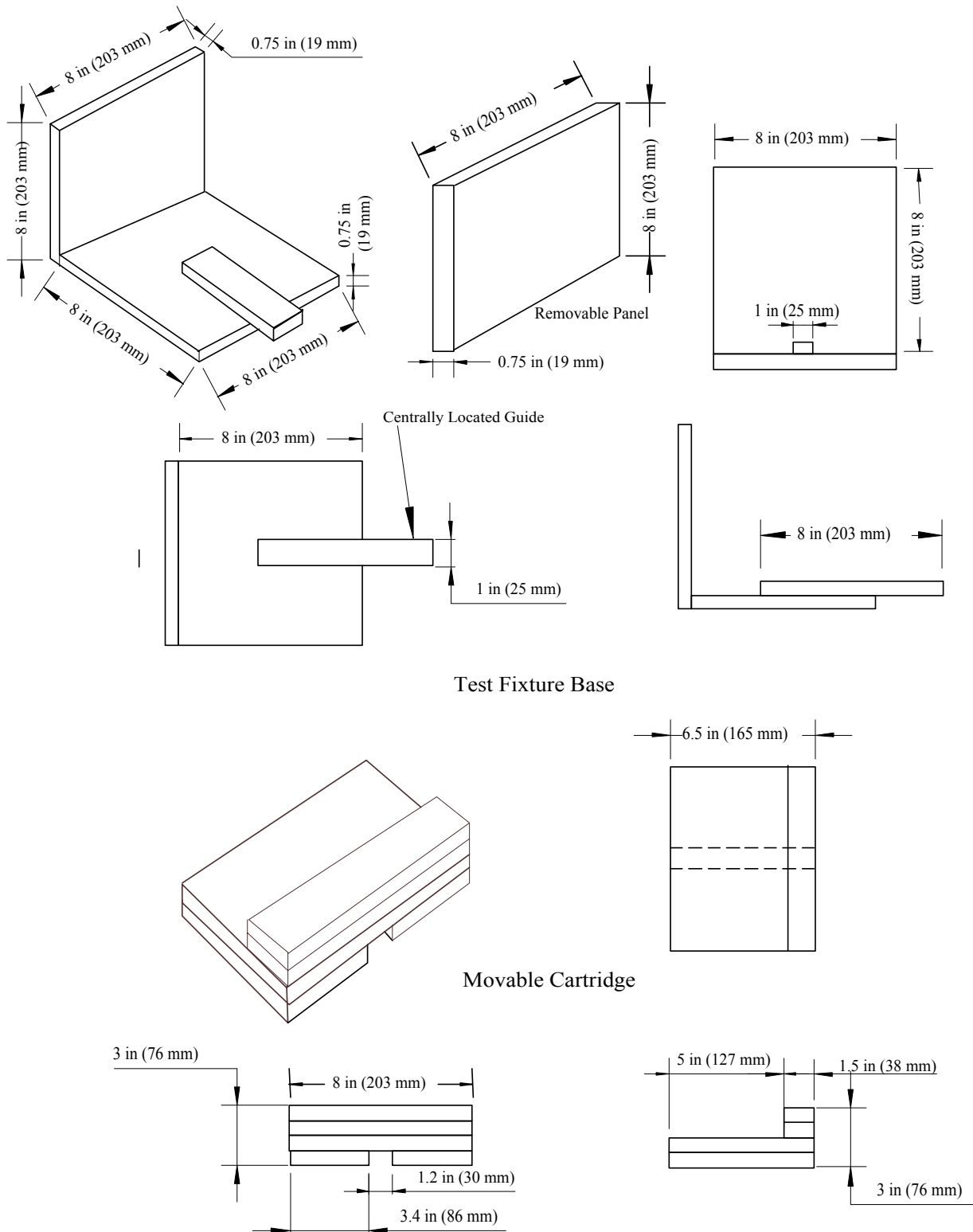


Figure C-2. Mock-up Assembly for Smoldering Ignition Resistance Test of Upholstery Cover Fabrics

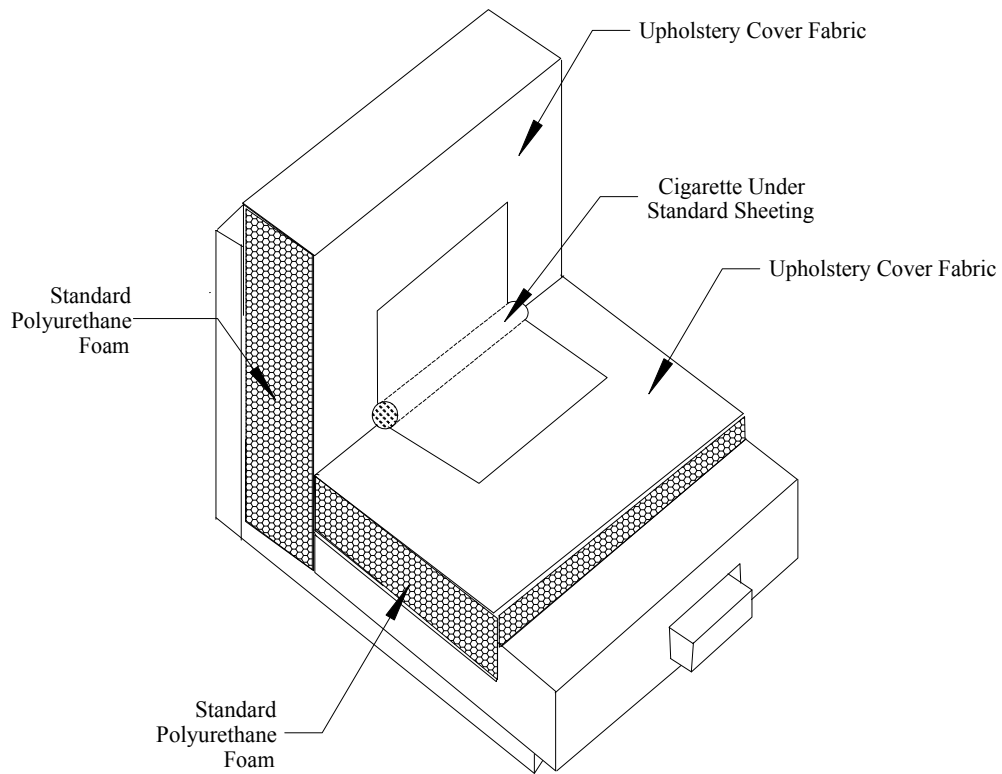


Figure C-3. Mock-up Assembly for Smoldering Ignition Resistance Test of Barrier Materials

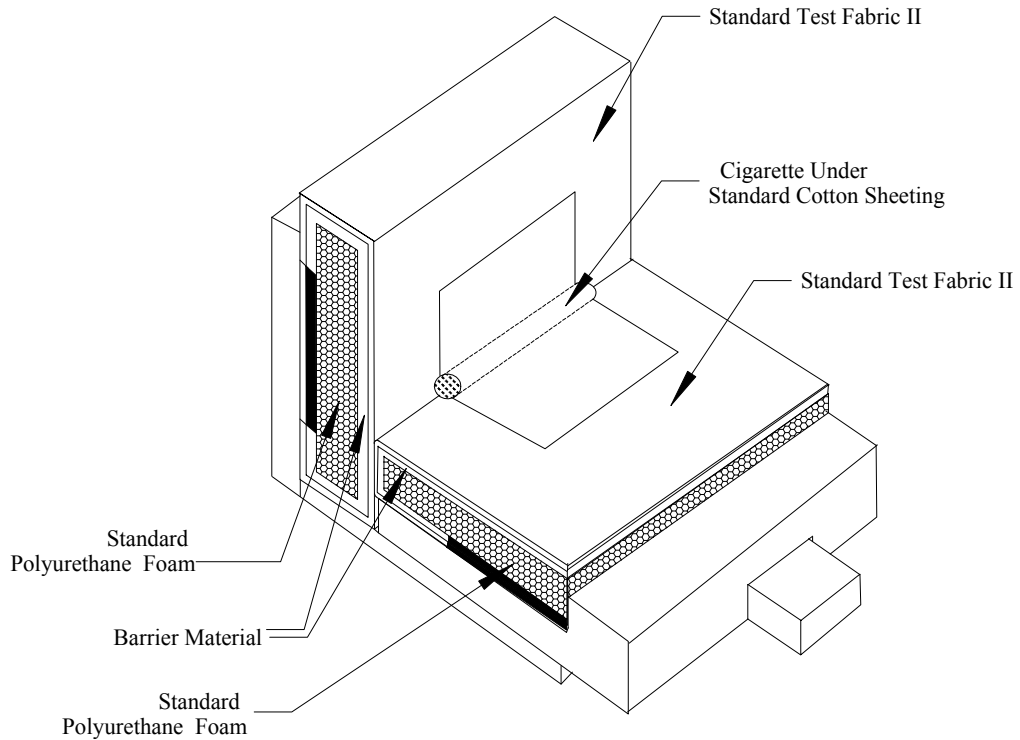


Figure C-4. Mock-up Assembly for Smoldering Ignition Resistance Test of Resilient Filling Component Materials

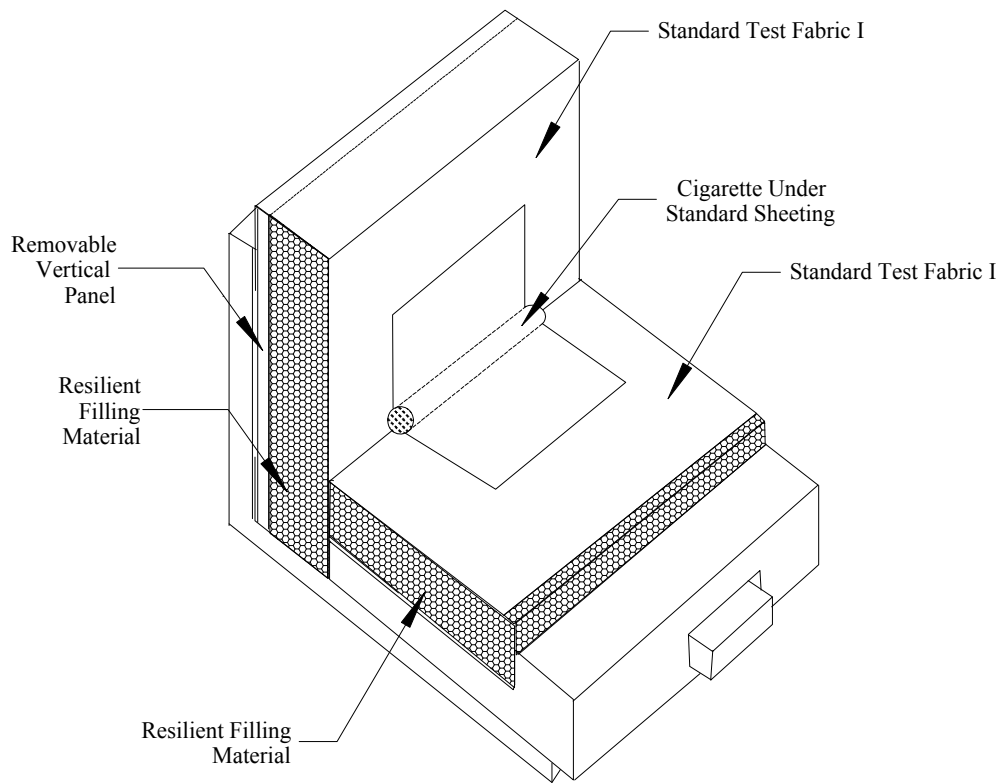


Figure C-5. Decking Materials Tester.

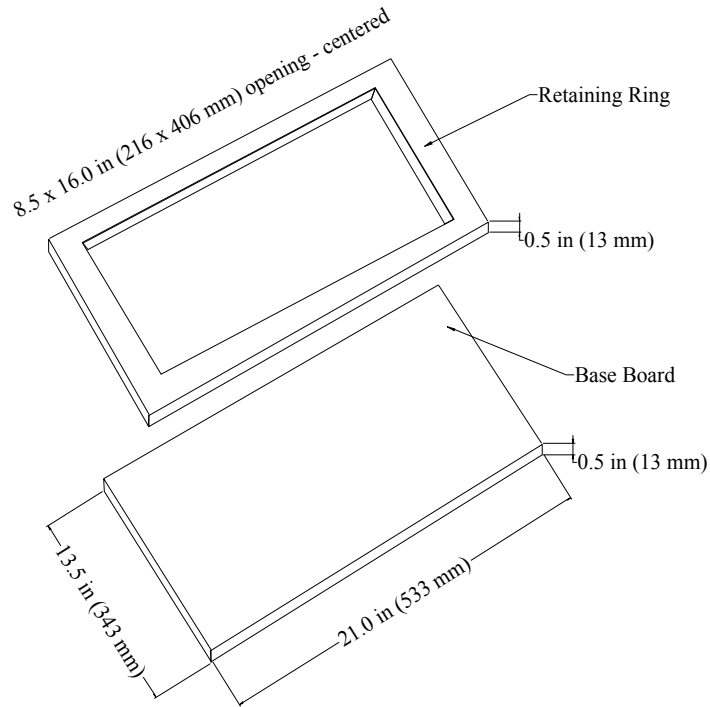


Figure C-6. Mock-up Assembly for Smoldering Ignition Resistance Test of Decking Materials.

