



Auralex Foam Flammability FAQs – March 2003

1. Are Auralex acoustical foam products fire retardant?

Yes. All Auralex acoustical foam products are fire retardant. Auralex acoustical foam is specifically designed to be fire retardant to better meet building and fire codes. This has always been the case with Auralex acoustical foam products since they are designed specifically for use as acoustical treatments. (Note: Auralex fire retardants are chemically added to the foam. They are *not* sprayed on.)

2. What is the difference between Auralex acoustical foam products and “bedding” or “packing” foam?

Since Auralex has been in business, our priorities have been (a) safety and (b) better sound. Auralex acoustical foam products are engineered to be (a) inherently fire retardant and (b) the best for treating acoustics. Many “bedding” or “packing” foams are (a) not fire retardant at all and (b) perform poorly as acoustical treatments. More than ever, Auralex encourages for the buyer to beware. Many “cheap” types of foam will not offer the levels of safety and acoustical control that Auralex acoustical foam products offer.

3. What happens if fire is exposed to Auralex acoustical foam?

It will smolder and smoke, but it will *not* burst into flames. If the flame source is removed or goes out, the foam will “self-extinguish.” Again, this is due to the inherent fire retardant properties of Auralex acoustical foam products. (Note: Auralex does *not* encourage lighting or otherwise exposing flames or heat sources to foam products. Auralex cannot be held liable for the misuse of products or injuries caused by the misuse of products. Also – regardless of whether you use Auralex acoustical foam products – general safety “common sense” should prevail in your facility. Fire extinguishers, fire exits, etc. should all be considered with general safety in mind.)

4. What information is required by my fire marshal, fire inspector, or building inspector?

Auralex tests all products in accordance with the ASTM E84 and NFPA 255 Standards for Surface Burning. This is in compliance with most building and fire safety codes. You can download a PDF of the official test report from http://www.auralex.com/acoustic_testingdata/acoustic_testingdata.asp. A fire marshal, fire inspector, or building inspector will be able to interpret this test and compare it to the requirements stated in your local building codes.

5. I've heard Auralex products are “Class B.” What does that mean?

The Standard for Surface Burning (ASTM E84 or NFPA 255) yields two numbers: “Flame Spread Index” and “Smoke Developed Index.” These numbers are compared with three ranges called out in building and fire safety codes. The three ranges correspond to “Class A,” “Class B,” and “Class C.” (Some codes refer to these as “Class 1,” “Class 2,” and “Class 3.” The Class designations are interchangeable.) Depending on the results of the test, a material will fall into one of these three categories. “Class A” (or “Class 1”) is the best, indicating that a material is not likely to burn very much, but may produce some smoke. “Class C” (or “Class 3”) is the worst, indicating that a material will likely burn more and possibly even produce more smoke.

All Auralex acoustical foam products are “Class B.” Without getting too technical, it means that Auralex acoustical foam products will burn a little more than a “Class A” material and will produce smoke.

Note that all “Classes” of foam are considered “fire retardant.” The types of foam to be extremely wary of are those that have no “Class” designation at all. In all likelihood, these materials have no fire retardant properties whatsoever and Auralex discourages their use as acoustical treatments.

6. So does “Class B” meet my building codes?

It depends. Unfortunately, building codes vary widely from place to place. There is no “nationwide” building or fire safety code that everyone follows. Literally, something considered acceptable for your building may not be considered acceptable for the same type of building in a town, say, four miles from you. If you are unsure at all about what is or is not acceptable for your building, you are strongly encouraged to contact your local fire marshal, fire inspector, or building inspector prior to purchasing *any* acoustical treatment products.

7. Are all the different Auralex colors and shapes of foam the same in terms of fire retardant properties?

Yes. In fact, each and every “bun” of Auralex acoustical foam that is poured is tested to make sure that the fire retardant properties are consistent for each and every Auralex acoustical foam product.

8. Is Sonomatt – the Auralex version of “egg crate” foam – fire retardant?

Yes. As mentioned in Question 7, each and every Auralex acoustical foam product – in any color or shape – is fire retardant and “self-extinguishing.”