



AMERICAN FIRE SAFETY COUNCIL

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Flame Retardants Helped Save Lives in Toronto Air Crash

WASHINGTON, D.C. August 5, 2005 - On August 2, an Air France jet crashed on landing at Toronto's Pearson International Airport. Fortunately, a tragedy was averted and all 309 passengers and crewmembers escaped. While the investigation is still underway, safety officials around the world have credited fire-resistant materials in the plane as a key factor in preventing loss of life.

A spokesman for the U.K.'s Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) told the Press Association, "Things have really moved on in recent years and ground accidents of this kind are now much more survivable...There have been some big steps taken in making the interior of aircraft more fire-resistant...Cabin seats are now far more flame-resistant and airlines have revised and strengthened their emergency procedures."

According to the *Washington Post*, safety officials said "the fire-retardant material now required in aircraft cabins may have helped slow the spread of flames and smoke, enabling all crew members and passengers to escape." The *Post* noted the plane was subject to "new regulations requiring fire-retardant treatment of seat cushions, carpet and other materials."

John Hickey of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration told *National Public Radio* that the agency has gradually bought survivors more time by requiring the use of more fire-resistant materials. "Many of the changes we did back in the '80s, including the insulation material and the interior materials in the airplane, are more resistant to catching fire," said Hickey.

This is just the latest dramatic example of how flame retardants save lives. Whether in protective clothing, furniture, mattresses, television sets or airplanes, flame retardants work silently to safeguard the public and fire fighters and reduce injuries and property damage from fires.

The American Fire Safety Council (AFSC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving fire safety through enhancement of fire codes and standards and promoting responsible use of flame retardants and flame retardant products.

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