



Bureau of Home Furnishings & Thermal Insulation

What You Should Know Before You Buy a Rebuilt Mattress

JULY 2002

CONSUMER INFORMATION SHEET

A mattress made with used materials is called a rebuilt mattress. Buying a rebuilt mattress can be less costly than buying a mattress made entirely of new materials. However, cost should not be the only deciding factor. The mattress you select should feel comfortable and meet your needs. Look for a mattress that is durable and has sound construction. Before you buy a rebuilt mattress, consider the following tips designed to help you plan your purchase wisely.

Look for a red label and yellow label on each rebuilt mattress.

- The law requires that two labels (red and yellow) be attached to each rebuilt mattress.
- The red label tells you the amount and type of used material in the mattress.
- The yellow label tells you that the mattress has been cleaned (sanitized).
- Rebuilt mattresses may be sanitized using dry heat or a chemical disinfectant such as "Steri-Fab."

Although a rebuilt mattress is made with used materials, it should be contamination-free.

- A rebuilt mattress may be made by adding filling materials to a used mattress. New or used filling materials may consist of polyurethane foam pads, blended cotton battings, synthetic fiber (such as polyester) battings or pads, or other materials. After it is rebuilt, the mattress must be sanitized by an approved method.
- California law prohibits the use of fabrics containing visible soiling or stains in a new or used mattress. If a mattress cover fabric contains filth, soiling or staining, the fabric must be removed and replaced by a new cover or it cannot be sold. Also the soiled or stained fabric cover, whether new or used, must not be reused in the mattress as a lower filling layer or over innersprings. It must be completely removed and thrown away before the clean cover is added.
- According to California regulations, cover fabrics and filling material must be clean and free from impurities such as trash, pulp, sludge, oil, grease, fat, skin or other extraneous matter.

Ask the salesperson if the rebuilt mattress meets the federal flammability standard.

- All mattresses sold in California must be designed to resist combustion from a smoldering cigarette. However, you should be aware that these mattresses are **not** fireproof and may catch fire if touched with a match, lighter or other open flame.
- You may see a label attached to the top of the mattress that states: "Notice: This mattress is designed to resist combustion which may result from a smoldering cigarette." This label is not required by law. Manufacturers display it on a voluntary basis. Remember to ask the salesperson if the rebuilt mattress meets the federal flammability standard.



What You Should Know Before You Buy a Rebuilt Mattress

Ask yourself: Does the advertised price sound too good to be true?

- When a rebuilt mattress is advertised for sale, it must be presented as a “used” or “rebuilt” mattress. Don't be fooled by a low advertised price. A rebuilt mattress can look new, but the filling material, frame or outside covering may contain used material.

If you are concerned about a rebuilt mattress you have purchased ...

- If you have health concerns about a rebuilt mattress already in your home, you should contact the retailer where you purchased the mattress. You can also place a plastic liner or cover over the mattress. The plastic will act as a barrier between your body and any foreign material or parasites that may be present in the mattress. The plastic cover can be cleaned with a household disinfectant. Contact a bedding retailer or department store to purchase a plastic liner or zippered cover.

The role of the Bureau of Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation

- The Bureau enforces California statutes and regulations governing the furniture, bedding and thermal insulation industries in California. The Bureau issues a variety of licenses to the home furnishings industry, including manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, supply dealers, bedding renovators, custom upholsterers, and sanitizers, as well as insulation manufacturers.
- Bureau inspectors routinely inspect licensed mattress makers and sellers throughout the state for product compliance with laws such as those requiring product labeling and appropriate business licensing. In addition, inspectors monitor the advertising practices of mattress sellers to make sure they comply with state law.
- Businesses that violate the Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation Act, the false and misleading advertising section of the Business and Professions Code, or Bureau regulations, are subject to a fine of up to \$2,500.

A rebuilt mattress can look new, but the filling material, frame or outside covering may contain used material.

Look for a posted license in the retailer's main business location.

- Every rebuilt mattress dealer must have a current license from the Bureau. The license must be posted in a conspicuous place in the store. The Bureau keeps licensing records for current license holders and for those who have held licenses within the previous two years.

How to file a complaint against a business:

- You may file a complaint with the Department of Consumer Affairs. Start the process online by visiting the Department's Web site www.dca.ca.gov, or call the Consumer Information Center toll-free at **1-800-952-5210** and request a complaint form.
- The Bureau may attempt to mediate the dispute, or take disciplinary action against the mattress vendor if laws or regulations have been violated. The Bureau can also alert law enforcement agencies or take enforcement action itself.

If you have questions about rebuilt mattresses, contact:

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(Page 2 of 2)