

Best Buy restricts toxic chemicals in its Exclusive Brand televisions

Company announces first-ever retail restriction on organohalogen flame retardants in its exclusive brand televisions.

SEATTLE, WA, UNITED STATES, February 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Best Buy has [announced a major new commitment](#) to healthy products: display enclosures and stands of all newly designed models of Best Buy's

Exclusive Brand televisions will no longer contain toxic organohalogen flame retardants (OFRs), starting now. As the second-largest retailer of consumer electronics in North America, Best Buy's announcement makes it the first major North American retailer to stop using these harmful chemicals in its private-label televisions.



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Best Buy's actions follow new laws banning the chemicals in electronics casings in the European Union and the state of New York.

Best Buy disclosed to [Toxic-Free Future](#) that it is not only restricting this highly hazardous class of chemicals, but also ensuring the replacements are verifiably safer. The company has worked with its suppliers to evaluate the alternatives utilizing the GreenScreen chemical hazard assessment framework, a method designed to identify

chemicals of high concern and safer alternatives. Best Buy's suppliers have identified a substitute with an improved safety profile. The company has ensured the replacement flame retardants are not in the highest hazard category under GreenScreen, and its substitute meets and exceeds this goal with a flame retardant currently designated under GreenScreen as Benchmark 3 (not ranked high for any hazards).

Health advocacy organizations from across the country applaud this move and anticipate more government and corporate policies to follow. Toxic-Free Future, Clean Water Action, and Clean

Production Action released the following statements in response to this news.

“We applaud Best Buy for taking this bold action,” said Mike Schade, director of Toxic-Free Future’s Mind the Store program. “This will help drive toxic flame retardants out of a major source of these hormone-disrupting chemicals in our homes. Other major retailers like Amazon, as well as other leading electronics brands such as Samsung and Hisense, must follow suit and join them.”

“Science has shown for years that televisions are a key source of toxic chemicals in homes, including flame retardants linked to hormone disruption and cancer,” said Erika Schreder, science director at Toxic-Free Future. “States including New York and Washington have stepped up to tackle this problem and ban the most toxic flame retardants in TVs—and now, Best Buy is proving companies can make TVs without them.”

“We are proud to see a Minnesota company really step up to live up to our Minnesota values of prioritizing environmental protection and public health,” said Deanna White, state director of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund. “Thank you Best Buy for being a leader not just for our state, but for the country. We hope Best Buy will now take the next step and restrict these chemicals in all televisions it sells.”

“In replacing organohalogen flame retardants with a safer flame retardant, Best Buy is demonstrating how to use a scientifically robust third party tool to select safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals,” said Shari Franjevic, GreenScreen program manager at Clean Production Action. “We look forward to other television retailers and manufacturers following Best Buy’s leadership.”

For additional information on Best Buy’s announcement, visit Toxic-Free Future’s [blog analysis](#).

BACKGROUND ON TOXIC FLAME RETARDANTS

Toxic flame retardants are dangerous cancer-causing and brain-harming chemicals associated with adverse health effects including endocrine and thyroid disruption, as well as harmful impacts to the reproductive and nervous systems. These chemicals used in the plastic casings of electronics can escape from products and contaminate our homes, workplaces, and bodies.

In 2017, Toxic-Free Future published its first report with Clean Production Action revealing OFRs were commonly used in televisions at high concentrations. In May of 2019, advocates sent Best Buy a letter from more than 50 consumer and public health organizations calling on the company to act. A few months later, a 2019 scientific study led by Toxic-Free Future found organohalogen flame retardants in 100% of TVs tested, which were purchased from Best Buy and Amazon. Advocates also sent a letter to Amazon and launched a petition urging Best Buy to eliminate flame retardants from its products. In the spring of 2020, advocates sent letters to a dozen major television brands, such as Hisense, LG, Samsung, and SONY, urging them to restrict toxic flame retardants in televisions. In response, SONY and LG Electronics disclosed actions

they were each taking on OFRs.

Currently, 16 states in the U.S. have adopted more than 45 policies restricting toxic flame retardants. In 2017, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warned electronics manufacturers and retailers to “eliminate the use” of halogenated flame retardants in plastic casings. In 2019, the European Union passed a ban on all organohalogen flame retardants in electronics casings that took effect in 2021. In 2021, the Washington state Department of Ecology issued a report to the legislature recommending a statewide ban on OFRs in electronic casings, under the state’s Safer Products for Washington law. Most recently, the state of New York became the first state in the country to ban them in electronics casings effective December 1, 2024.

TOXIC-FREE FUTURE

Toxic-Free Future (TFF) is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization that advances the use of safer products, chemicals, and practices through science, organizing, advocacy, and consumer engagement to ensure a healthier tomorrow. Safer Chemicals Healthy Families is a Toxic-Free Future program dedicated to achieving strong federal policies that protect the public from toxic chemicals. Mind the Store is a Toxic-Free Future program that challenges retailers to eliminate toxic chemicals and replace them with safer alternatives, and scores major retailers on their safer chemicals policies in an annual Retailer Report Card.

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