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**Toxic Flame Retardant Chemicals Found in TVs  
Flame Retardant Banned Decade Ago Still Being Used in TVs**

**\*\*Embargoed Copy of Full Report Available Upon Request\*\***

Seattle, WA – A [new study released today](#) finds TVs could be bad for your health in an unexpected way: TVs contain toxic flame retardant chemicals that can contaminate homes. The new testing by [Toxic-Free Future](#) and [Clean Production Action](#) found that TV manufacturers continue to use toxic flame retardant chemicals in their products despite evidence the chemicals are harmful to health. Two TVs were found to contain the banned chemical flame retardant deca-BDE in apparent violation of Washington state law.

This new information comes on the day the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission will decide whether to grant a petition to ban certain toxic flame retardants in several classes of consumer products, including electronics. Experts are concerned about the flame retardant chemicals in TVs because they can escape the products and end up in household dust, exposing adults and children to the chemicals through ingestion, such as through hand-to-mouth activity.

A copy of the study, “TV Reality: Toxic Flame Retardants in TVs,” can be found at [toxicfreefuture.org/flame-retardants-tvs](http://toxicfreefuture.org/flame-retardants-tvs).

Specifically, the study tested 12 TV housings (the plastic outer portion) for seven flame retardants of high and moderate concern for health. The TVs were made by 12 different manufacturers, including Sanyo, Samsung Element, Hisense, Sharp, TCL, Toshiba, Vizio, Sony, AOC, and Insignia.

**Testing results found:**

- 11 of the 12 TVs contained flame retardants at concentrations of up to 33% of the weight of the plastic enclosure.
- Eight of the TVs contained flame retardants of high concern.
- Two of the TVs – one made by Element and one made by Samsung – contained the PBDE flame retardant deca-BDE, despite being banned in five states. Those states are Washington, Maine, Oregon, Vermont, and Maryland. The TVs in the study were purchased in Washington.
- Only one TV, made by Insignia, did not contain any of the flame retardants tested for.

The flame retardants tested for in the study are linked to a variety of negative health effects, including harm to the nervous system, hormone disruption, and cancer. Studies released in the past year linked higher levels of deca-BDE in the home with greater incidence of thyroid cancer and buildup of brominated flame retardants in placenta with altered thyroid hormone function.

“TV manufacturers must step up to safeguard the health of their customers. Televisions shouldn't contain flame retardants that can escape into house dust and are linked to serious health effects like hormone disruption and cancer,” said Erika Schreder, Science Director for Toxic-Free Future and lead author of the study. “It's disappointing that two TVs contained the banned flame retardant deca-BDE. Attorneys General in states that have banned deca must investigate and take action if warranted.”

The research shows that after PBDE flame retardants were banned, TV manufacturers switched to other chemical flame retardants that pose a health risk for people. These new generation flame retardants include DBDPE, which is almost identical to deca-BDE, together with other brominated flame retardants already found to be building up in people.

Dr. Mark Rossi, Executive Director of Clean Production Action states, “the testing results highlight the need for manufacturers to understand the toxicity of chemicals in their products and to use tools like GreenScreen® to identify safer alternatives and avoid regrettable substitutes.”

The study found that while television manufacturers have issued various statements and policies over the years about the use of flame retardant chemicals in their products, only two companies publicly report efforts to reduce chemicals of concern in their products. LG has banned all PBDE flame retardants in its products and Insignia (private label brand of Best Buy) launched a pilot project in 2015 to redesign the power source of its TV. Best Buy has also publicly committed to phase out chemicals of concern from its products, reduce its use of harmful chemicals, and improve its management of chemicals.

“This fall as we gather around the TV with our families to watch our favorite shows and football games, these products may be unsuspectingly releasing dangerous chemicals into our homes.” said Mike Schade, Mind the Store Campaign Director for Safer Chemicals Healthy Families. “Major retailers of electronics like Best Buy can play an important role in working with their suppliers to eliminate toxic flame retardants and substitute them with safer alternatives. We are pleased that Best Buy has developed a new chemicals management program and hope they and other retailers will reduce and eliminate these dangerous chemicals.

A coalition of environmental health and business groups are urging the following policy actions to reduce exposure to toxic flame retardants from televisions:

- State policy action: states should restrict high-concern flame retardants in television enclosures and require manufacturers to assess and adopt safer alternatives.

- Enforcement: states with laws banning the use of deca-BDE should immediately take action against companies selling televisions containing the chemical.
- Right to Know: states should require companies to disclose chemicals of high concern in electronics, including televisions.
- Companies can make safer products: manufacturers should adopt and make public comprehensive chemicals policies to ensure televisions they produce are free of high-concern flame retardants.
- Retailers can act: retailers should adopt and make public comprehensive chemicals policies to ensure televisions they sell are free of high-concern flame retardants.

“This study shows that state laws are important tools to protect health and environment from harmful chemicals.” said Sarah Doll, National Director of Safer States. “However, the study also shows the need for better enforcement of those laws. Without enforcement, manufacturers can continue to use toxic chemicals despite promises to the contrary. We call on State Attorneys General to enforce existing bans on toxic flame retardants and for state leaders to adopt policies that get other toxic flame retardants out of consumer products.”

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[Toxic-Free Future](#) advocates for and wins strong science-based health protections for people and the environment.

[Clean Production Action](#) is a mission driven organization that provides solutions to hazardous chemicals in products and supply chains. CPA’s three core programs are BizNGO, GreenScreen® for Safer Chemicals, and the Chemical Footprint Project.