

A question has come up about our new uniforms and the flame resistance of the material. This was an issue that I investigated as soon as the company indicated their preference for the type of material they would be using for the uniform. I contacted the AFA International Air Safety Health and Security Department (ASHSD) about this since they have been a longtime proponent of the use of fire retardant materials in uniforms. I discovered that there are fire retardant fabrics that are used by fire fighters, however, I think we would all agree the heavy fabric is not appropriate for a Flight Attendant uniform. Another possible option in the past was to treat fabrics to make them fire resistant. As you may recall these fabrics were used to make baby sleep wear and was considered to be the gold standard. However, that is no longer an option since it turned out that the chemicals used to treat the fabrics were carcinogenic.

For the company's part they have asserted that the safety and flammability characteristics and performance of new uniform will be the same as our current uniform. Based upon the company's assertion about the uniform's performance, what I learned from the AFA ASHSD regarding fire retardant and resistant fabrics, and consultation with the uniform committee, there does not appear to be an acceptable fire-retardant alternative to use for the new uniform. I have attached the testing that the company did with the new fabric for you to review.

#### Additional Information:

The new uniform suiting is composed of 98% polyester and 2% spandex. The current uniform is 70% polyester, 28% rayon, and 2% spandex. The new blend is composed in such a way that it is substantially more comfortable and durable, while providing safety and flammability characteristics no different than the previous uniform.

Polyester is a broad category of synthetic fiber. Much of the historical concern about the flammability and melting of polyester is rooted in the performance of polyesters several decades ago. The only truly flame-resistant materials are those certified as fire-retardant (like our seat covers and other cabin textiles), but these are definitely not materials you would want to wear every day.

Samples of all of the materials used in our new uniform were tested by Intertek Laboratories (one of the two major labs used by the industry for fabric testing). Tests included pH value, flammability, stability for washing, color fastness, and chemical inclusions. All materials passed the tests, including flammability. The new materials performed just as well under the flammability standard (16 CFR 1610) as the current uniform. Both the new material and current material were classified as Category 1 (Normal Flammability). The fabric in our new suiting is identical to uniforms supplied by our vendor to Virgin America pilots for many years.

In short, we believe these uniforms are safe for all of our employees and meet the needs of daily wear far better than the current uniform. On November 14th we expect to see all of our uniformed colleagues report for duty in the new uniform.