

ON TRACK!

FALL 2011 PASSION ~ ARTISTRY ~ BUSINESS



Computerized Quilting
in Every Day Quilts

Fresh Ideas!
Featured Quilt Pattern:
Happy Holidays

Safe
Batting
Choices



MQS®

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Pieced & Quilted by Marlene Hiltner

Editorial

Dear Member,

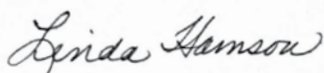
Were I live Fall came and went so fast this year, it brought to mind how fast life goes by as well. There are so many quilt projects in my plans I better get busy! Fall colors, earth tones, are my favorites, living in the north woods in the summer months I get to decorate our cabin with all sorts of quilts made from fabrics of these colors. You would not believe my stash...or maybe you would! This summer I completed the northwest section shop hop in Minnesota. For visiting all 9 shops all participants received a packet of batik fabrics. This was no small packet either. There were 9 yards of 18 different fabrics. My stash does not contain any batiks, at least before the shop hop. Well, guess what! I have a pattern I want to complete before the 2012 show using batiks and 11 of the fabrics in my packet will work for this project so, since the pattern calls for 20 different colors I had to go shopping for MORE batik fabrics! Funny how that works! My stash is changing!

Speaking of changes. The Winter 2012 issue of *On Track! Magazine* will be the first issue for our new managing editor, Kathi Eubank. Kathi spent nearly 30 years working in the world of advertising, first in accounting and then moving to media planning and buying. At the first agency, someone discovered that she had a strong command of the English language and so along with her other duties, she became a proofreader. That distinction followed her to the next agency where she became the lead proofreader reviewing everything from small newspaper ads to annual reports.

Kathi bought her first longarm machine in August 2005. Most of her practice quilts went to Hurricane Katrina victims. She still does several charity quilts every year although most of them now go to Wounded Warriors. She built up her customer list and in 2008 she did exactly 100 customer quilts. Kathi says she is always looking for ways to improve her skills and does so by attending classes, going to quilt shows and even spending time at quilt retreats where she always learns something from other quilters.

When she is not quilting, she enjoys golfing, traveling and spending time with her family. At MQS[®] she has been a teacher angel many times, helped with the fashion show, super sampler and auction. She has also helped with quilt receiving and hanging the show. And the biggies are that she has worked the judging room all three days the last few years and the last two years she was the shipping coordinator responsible for taking the show down and shipping the quilts. We welcome Kathi to the editorial staff of *On Track! Magazine*. ■

Happy Quilting!



Linda Hamson

On Track! Magazine

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SAFE

BATTING CHOICES

for Baby and Invalid *quilts*

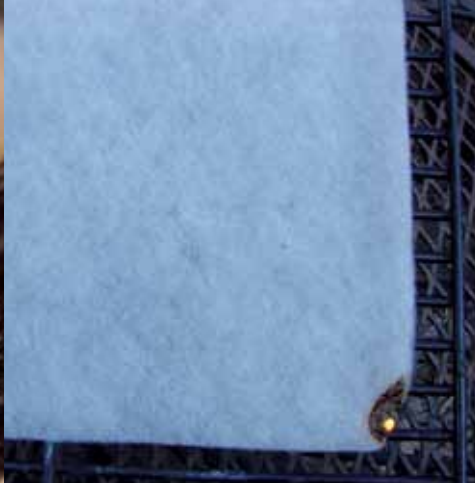
Written by and photos by Beth Kurzava

Burn Tests Tell the Story

Much has been written about batting characteristics. How a quilt will be used and cared for, drape ability, warmth, loft, shrinkage, density of quilting, bed or wall.....So much to think about. Yet, in all those articles, I don't recall reading anything about safety. Safety?! Isn't batting that stuff in the middle of a quilt that makes it soft and warm? Could a batting choice really be unsafe?

Misinformation Revealed

Recently, I attended a quilt guild meeting where a pink satin whole cloth baby quilt was presented by a professional longarm quilter during "Show and Tell". The quilt was well received and everyone admired the design and workmanship. The following week I was again present as this quilt was displayed at a longarm machine quilters' guild meeting. This time, the quilt met with more scrutiny. The machine quilters were interested in more



Wool burn sample one.



Wool burn sample two.



Wool burn result.

technical questions – needle size, thread, type of machine, humidity, pre-wound bobbins, tension, thread path, pattern designer...Whew! It's enough to make your head spin! And so it was that someone asked, "What kind of batting did you use?" The longarm quilter proudly responded, "I used polyester." Another quilter followed this with her very false understanding that polyester is naturally flame-retardant. Nothing could be further from the truth! My heart sank as I realized that these genuine, good intentioned quilters were tragically misinformed. At this point, I knew our longarm profession was sorely in need of education. I hope this article will be the start of spreading the word about fire safety and how it relates to the quilts that we create.

The Ugly Truth

I grew up in the '70's when polyester leisure suits for men were at the height of popularity. Polyester made its way into our lives, too, when my father's company changed from 100% cotton, company-issued work shirts, to a mostly polyester blend work shirt. My mother was thrilled – no more ironing! But that decision was quickly reversed. Why? As a lineman for the power company, my father and his co-workers came into contact everyday with voltage, high and low, which can create a burn. By wearing polyester, they were exposed to a much greater burn hazard. What might be a small burn hole on a cotton shirt could quickly magnify on a polyester shirt, fusing the melted polyester to the skin. Once this happened, the polyester fabric could only be removed by removing the skin with it.

Ask Rita Briner, owner of Quilters' Station in Lee's Summit, Missouri what she thinks

about polyester. She'll tell you about her son, who at the age of seven, attempted to stomp out a grass fire. It wasn't his cotton jeans that caught fire. It was his polyester socks that caught fire and melted to his feet and legs, causing excruciating pain, months of therapy, and now in his 40's, a lifetime with deformed feet.

Or talk to Lucy Grimes, from Odessa, Missouri, whose father caught fire while lighting a pilot light on a furnace. He was wearing a polyester suit and suffered through months of debriding, therapy, and pneumonia. His was a long recovery. Or consider a young local boy who was enjoying an evening with his family last summer, sitting beneath a blanket, watching fireworks, when those fireworks went astray and caught the blanket on fire. His was also a long recovery at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City.

Let us consider fire. Fire needs three things to burn: Heat, Oxygen, and Fuel. Without any one of these, fire cannot exist. To believe that a fire can only start from an open flame is not true. House fires can start from a number of sources including loose wall outlets and faulty wiring, overloaded/worn extension cords, clogged dryer lint traps, empty sockets in light fixtures, lightning strikes, improperly stored chemicals, or a simple kitchen towel left too close to the stove burner to name a few. Visit <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/firesafety/housefire/hotspots.htm> online to check your home for other hot spots.

Fire and Fabric

Many websites indicate the characteristics of fabrics and how they react to fire. All agree that cotton does not melt or draw away from flames. The University of Missouri Extension website ►

Managing Editor's Note:

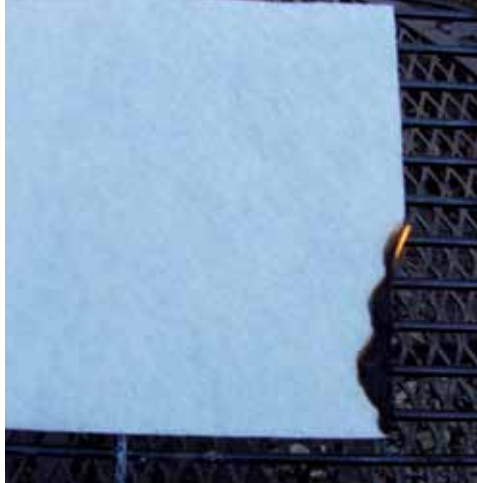
Polyester batting has become an industry standard which everyone is familiar with and freely uses in everyday quilting. In today's marketplace we are offered so many batting choices that we often overlook the end use of the quilt we are making and seldom think about appropriate materials for that end use. In this article, Beth Kurzava reminds us that there are three end uses in our quilt making that require a batting material other than polyester. The eye opening Burn Test Study she conducted on different batting materials and the accompanying Burn Test Photos tell the story of how different batting materials burn when exposed to flame. Beth's passion to educate longarm quilters about fire safety and batting choices is to be commended and her efforts are greatly appreciated. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Beth for her tenacity in researching the subject, collecting the data, and her willingness to inform and educate us all. This is a job well done.

Editor's Note:

Beth has provided us with many more photographs than we could print with this article. For additional photos to compliment this article visit www.IMQA.org under the Membership menu option click on *On Track! Magazine*.



Silk burn sample one.



Silk burn sample two.



Silk burn result.

(<http://missourifamilies.org/features/materialarticles/feature7.htm>) notes that “Synthetics (polyester) may catch fire quickly.....sputter, flame, and **melt to the skin** or the flaming melt will drop to the floor.” And in an Iowa State Extension publication (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/ncr174.pdf>) polyester is noted as, “Burns slowly and melts when burning. May melt and pull away from small flame without igniting. Melted area may drip off clothing carrying flames with it... Residue is molten and hot and difficult to remove.” That’s a long way from being naturally flame-retardant! How a fabric is made also comes into play. Heavy, dense fabrics ignite with difficulty and burn more slowly than light, thin, airy fabrics. Summer weight clothing is more likely to catch fire than winter weight fabrics; however, heavy weight fabrics burn longer because there is more flammable material available. And fabrics with more surface area exposed to oxygen (i.e. lacey, gauzy, brushed) burn more easily.

Additionally, clothing that fits close to the body is less likely to stray into a flame. This is one of the criteria used by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to set the standards for children’s sleepwear. Christi Cassidy, a 30+ year treatment nurse in the Burn Unit at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, a quilter and burn survivor herself, worked with the CPSC from 2005-2007 to collect data for a study of sleepwear in which children were burned. Ms. Cassidy states that children prefer to wear cotton sleepwear. It feels soft against the skin and breathes better compared to polyester. CPSC requires children’s sleepwear to be snug fitting to reduce oxygen availability and/or to be made of flame resistant fabrics. Ms. Cassidy described painful therapy for children who suffer from polyester burns, including debridement (scrubbing the polyester from the body) with cotton squares that feel like a wire brush to the raw nerves of a burn patient, all done without sedation. If the burns are deep, surgery may be required for skin grafts or even

reconstructive surgery for damaged tissue. She recommends not using polyester in a quilt for a baby or child, because polyester can melt at high temperatures even without a flame, dripping on whoever is underneath the quilt. She further states that many children drag a baby quilt around with them for years. As we now know, that loose quilt being drug around is more likely to stray into an open flame.

Fire Marshall Gould of Independence, Missouri reminded me that polyester is a petroleum-based product and is highly combustibile and flammable. Gould said, “We know from experience that 100% cotton has some natural fire-resistant features, but still will burn. As quilters you should purchase materials that are labeled and manufactured as fire-resistant.” Fire Marshall Gould further stated, “Check your material rating for your product. If it’s pure polyester, when it burns, it liquefies. When it liquefies, it turns into a flammable or combustibile liquid in most cases unless there’s a special coating or treatment in that material. That would be



Cotton burn sample one.



Cotton burn sample two.



Cotton burn result.



Polyester burn sample one.



Polyester burn sample two.



Polyester burn result.

a dangerous environment. Always look at the technical data on any product.”

If after reading this information you are still not convinced that placing polyester batting into a baby quilt is a poor choice, then check out the tests of undergarments worn by firefighters working at the U.S. Forest Service by visiting <http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/htm08512348/index.htm> online. Granted that firefighters get into some pretty hot spots, but this study found that even a firefighter’s protective outer gear was not enough to save the firefighter from being burned by melting polyester underwear! U.S. Forest Firefighters are now required to wear only cotton, wool, silk or aramid (flame resistant) undergarments. And in 2006, the military banned the use of polyester by Marines stationed in Iraq due to the seriousness of burns experienced while both on and off duty. “The camouflage utility uniforms are designed to turn to ash and blow away after the material is burned,” said Capt. Lynn E. Welling, who recommends

wearing 100% cotton clothing while on missions.” Research more on this subject online at <http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,93820,00.html>.

Mobility Makes the Difference

In the Iowa State Extension publication aforementioned, it is noted that “The U.S. Fire Administration points out that 80 percent of fire deaths occur in residences and that these residential fires most often start in the kitchen. People over 65 and children under 5 have the highest risk of fire death in these fires.....” Clearly mobility could be an issue for infants and the elderly, as well as for invalids. Why, then would we use materials in quilts that would only further exacerbate their injuries? Unfortunately, the answer to this question is one of cost. Polyester is often the least expensive batting alternative. I’ve seen it many times in my 9+ years of longarming. Customers use a coupon to purchase a batting at the local fabric/craft store in order to save some money. We all know the cost of making a quilt is getting more expensive all the time, but

trying to reduce this cost by purchasing an inappropriate batting is not the way to go. Polyester has its place in quilting, but not in a quilt for someone who can’t independently remove themselves from underneath the quilt.

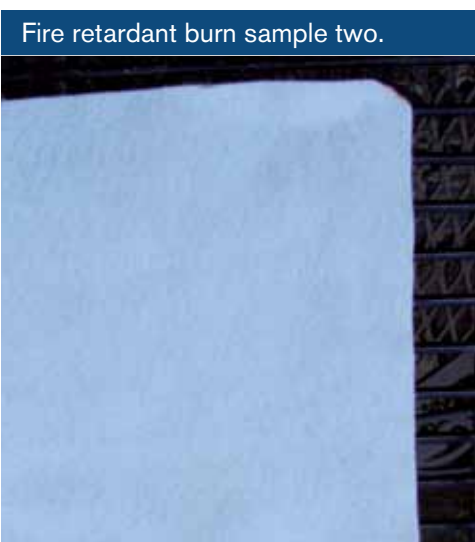
Conclusion

Our industry is not regulated by the Federal Government to meet flammability standards in the way the bedding industry is. However, that does not relieve us of the moral and ethical responsibility to our customers. Without more government oversight, we can still make a better world for all.

The Burn Tests I conducted clearly illustrated to me and I hope also to you the reader, that polyester batting should not be used in a *Baby Quilt* or a quilt made especially for an *Elderly* or *Invalid Person*. The Burn Test Photos clearly show that the **Flame Retardant**, **100% Cotton**, and **100% Wool** battings were clearly the best choices for these types of quilts because they better resisted the burning process. ►



Fire retardant burn sample one.



Fire retardant burn sample two.



Fire retardant burn result.



Cotton poly blend burn sample one.



Cotton poly blend burn sample two.



Cotton poly blend burn result.

I feel strongly that the professional longarm community needs to be proactive on this issue. We need to encourage our customers to choose a truly flame retardant, 100% Cotton or 100% Wool Batting whenever they are making a baby quilt or a quilt for an elderly or invalid person. We have a great opportunity to educate our customers and help them to make **smart** and **safe** batting choices. In the process of doing this, we can save lives and also spare many children and elderly individuals from suffering the painful effects of receiving a burn that has been magnified by a polyester batting.

Hobbs Bonded Fibers who produces the *Hobbs Heirloom Collection* states they would never suggest polyester batting for a baby quilt because of the reasons stated above. They would, however, suggest a wool batting. They do not offer a flame retardant batting because they have not seen a demand for it. *Warm and Natural* does not currently offer a flame retardant batting because of the difficulty in getting supplies. At this time, *Quilters Dream* offers the only batting I could find in my

research marketed as flame retardant. This batting contains no chemical additives and will remain flame retardant after repeated washings. This batting also meets independent laboratory, international standards and the New Draft CAL 604 law.

By educating ourselves on this issue and passing this education on to our customers, helping them to make safe and appropriate batting choices, we can make a very positive impact in this world. And if our customers begin to request flame retardant battings, batting vendors will respond to their customers' needs.

About the Burn Tests

Using guidelines established by the CPSC, I conducted a burn test of several battings that I have used over the years. I did not have a controlled lab environment; my tests were conducted outdoors. However, I chose a calm day with little to no wind in a well-ventilated area. Each sample started as an 8" square and was laid on a grate from a discarded grill set at 45 degrees over a non-combustible surface with a bucket of water at the ready nearby.

I used a grill lighter set to the smallest flame for three seconds to each sample (less if it caught fire quickly). The photos tell the story of how quickly and lethally polyester will burn. There are two photos of each test batting. The first photo shows the amount of flame during the test. The second photo shows the end result of the burn. I chose not to name any of the battings or batting makers because I am not against using a batting with polyester in a quilt. My concern was to understand how the different types of batting materials reacted to fire. This would allow me to make better informed and more appropriate batting choices depending on the end use of the quilt. ■

Beth Kurzava, the eldest of three siblings, was born in Macon, Missouri. She sewed doll clothes and her own clothing as a child, learning other needle arts and to quilt from her mother, two grandmothers, and great-grandmother. Following college, she raised two daughters and worked in management in the U.S. Federal Government. Her second career began in early 2003 as

Bamboo cotton blend burn sample one.

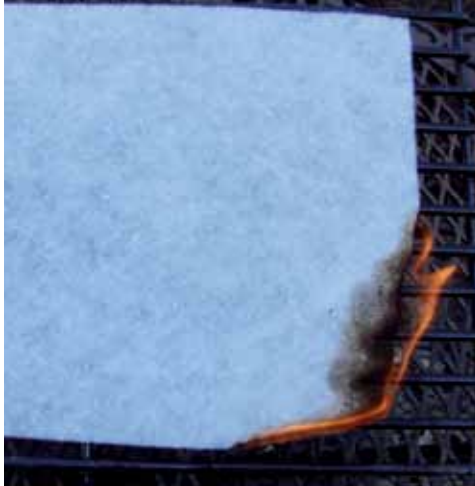


Bamboo cotton blend burn sample two.



Bamboo cotton blend result.





Cotton corn blend burn sample one.



Cotton corn blend burn sample two.



Cotton corn blend burn result.

a longarm quilter with the purchase of a Gammill Optimum Plus machine, upgrading to a Statler Stitcher in 2005. Beth has won many blue ribbons at local and state quilt shows; numerous ribbons and awards at regional, and international quilt shows (including MQS®); and been juried into the AQS show in both Des Moines and Paducah. Beth is a member of several local quilting guilds and is a Founding Member of the Mo-Kan Machine Quilters Guild. She is an authorized Gammill/Statler Sales Representative offering sales, service, and continuing education for all Gammill/Statler products serving the Greater Kansas City Area, Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska. She is also a Certified Trainer for Creative Studio. In her nearly nine years of longarm quilting, Beth's list of clients include such noted quilt designers as Rita Briner (Quilters Station), Lynne Hagmeier (Kansas Troubles), Renee Plains (Liberty Star), and Linda Brannock (Star Quilt Company). Her work has also been published in Better Homes and Gardens Quilt Sampler, and Primitive Quilts and Projects.



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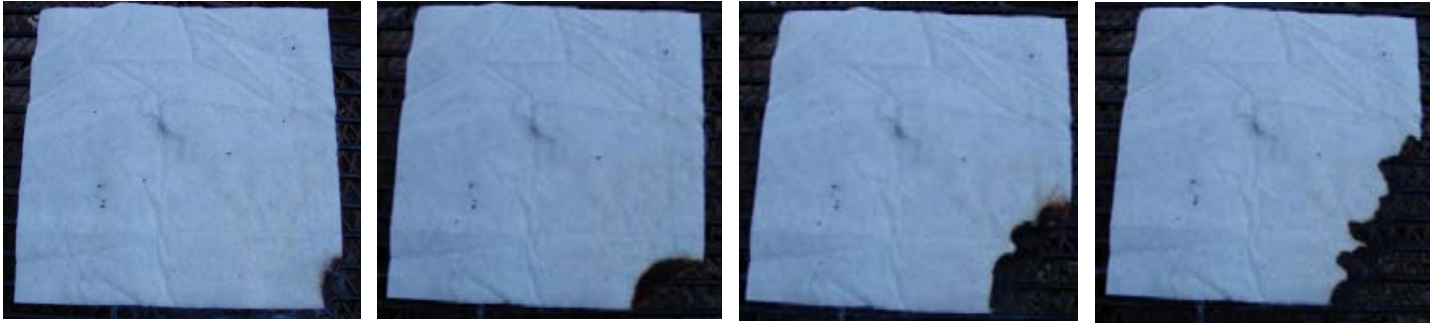
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Additional Images for the Safe Batting article written by Beth Kurzava for the Fall 2011 issue of On Track! Magazine..

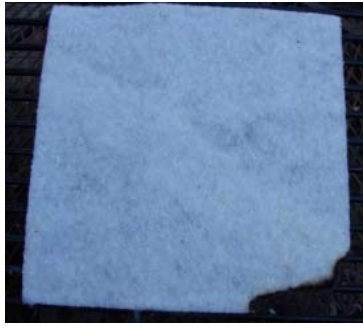
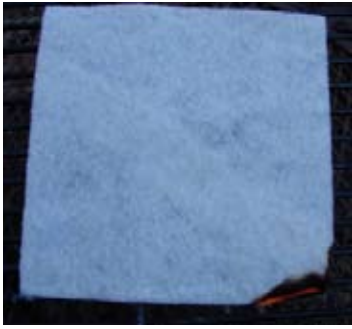
Bamboo Blend Sample



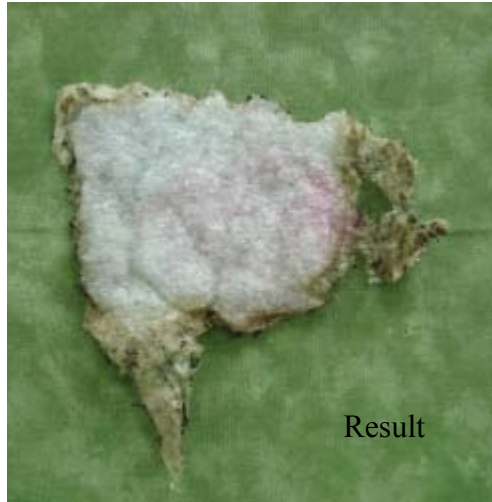
Cotton Corn Blend Sample



Cotton Poly Blend 1 Sample



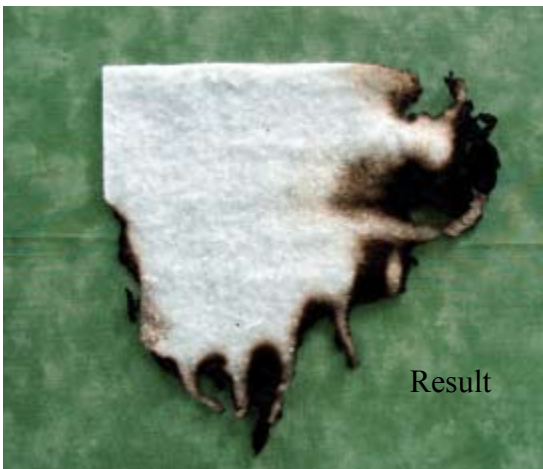
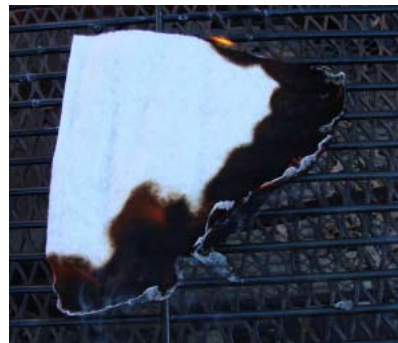
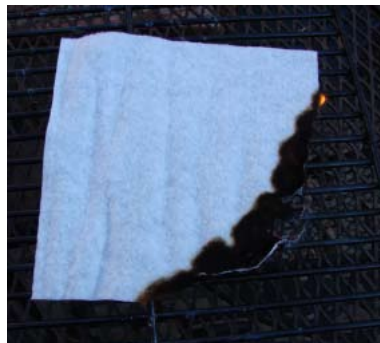
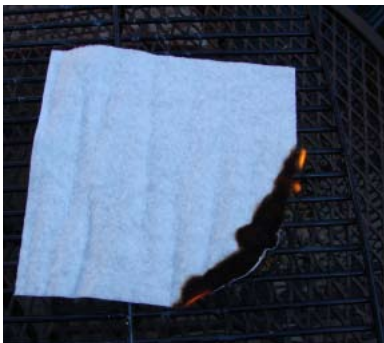
Cotton Poly Blend Sample 2



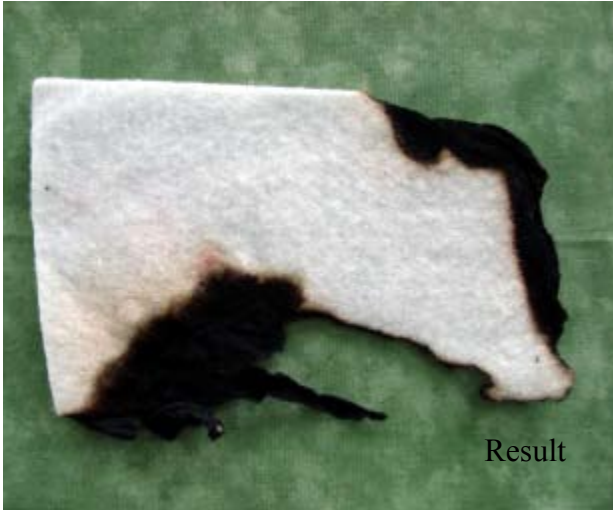
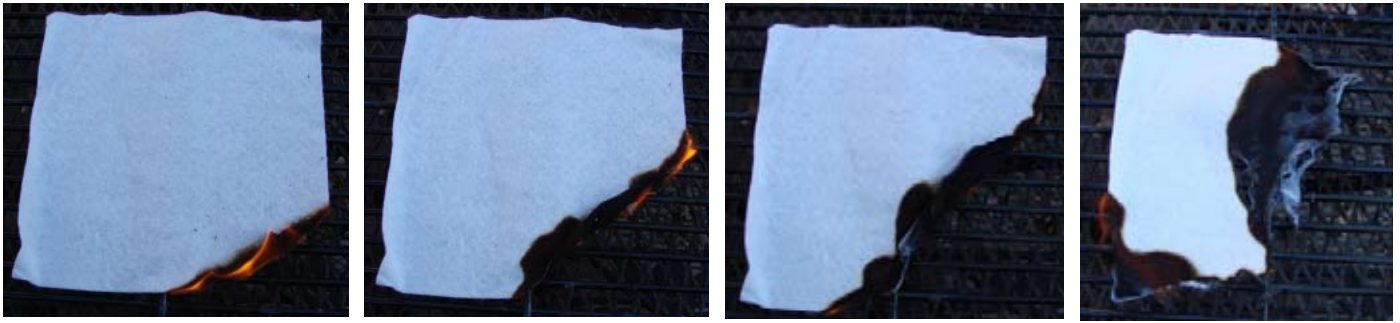
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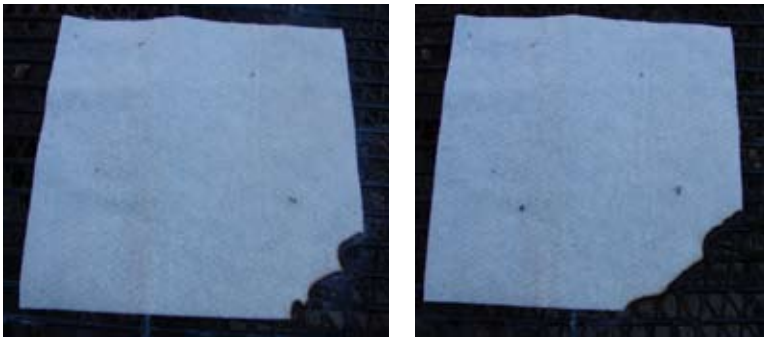
Cotton Sample 1



Cotton Sample 2



Cotton Sample 3



Cotton Sample 4



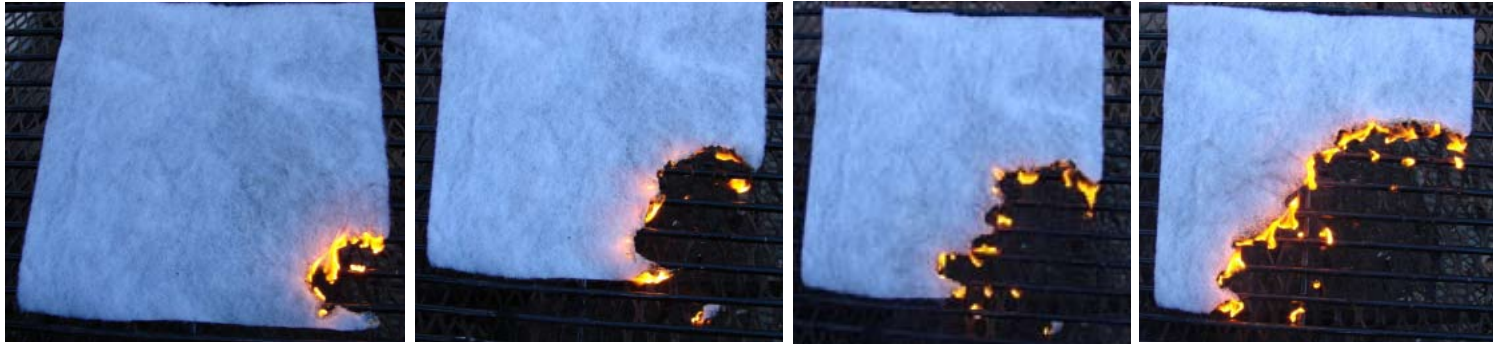
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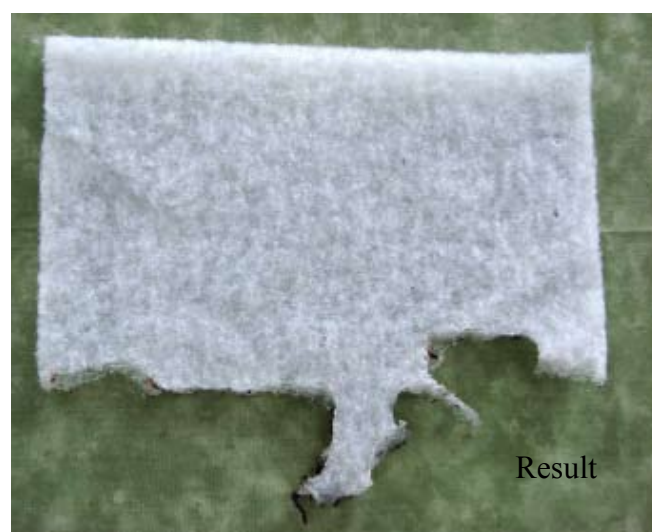
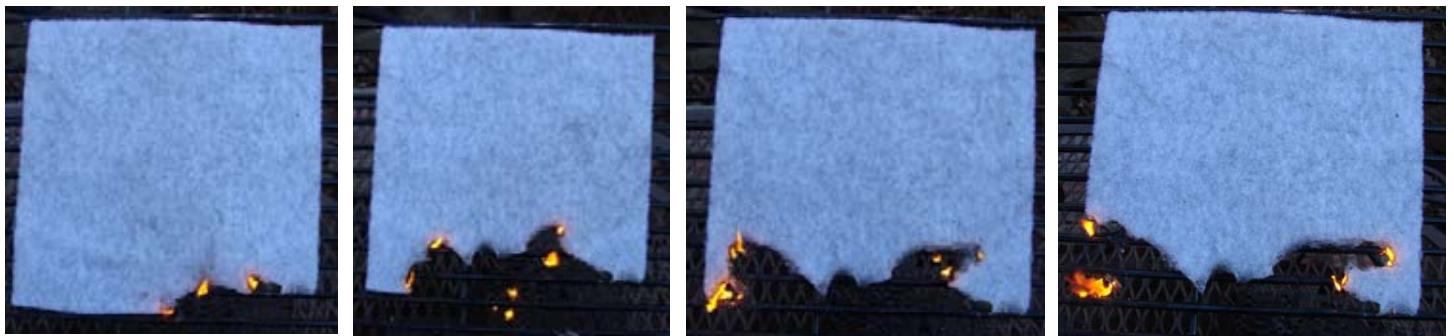
Fire Retardant Sample 2



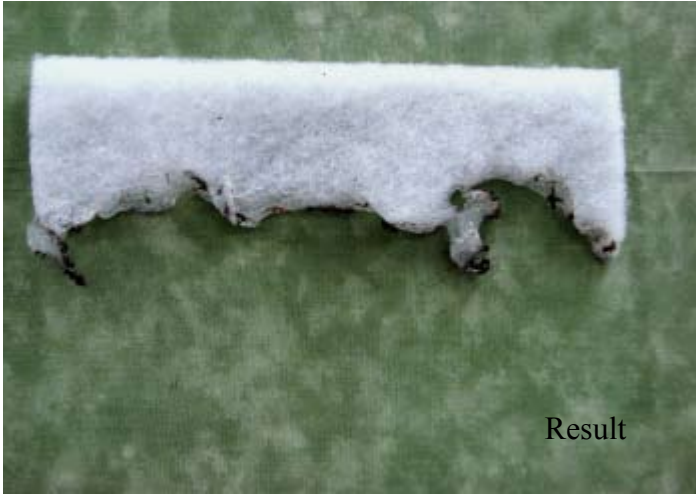
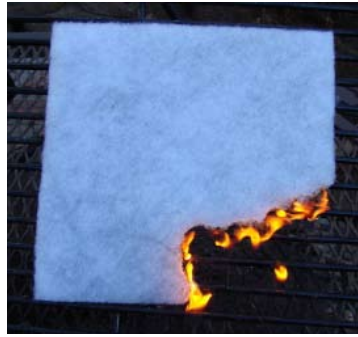
Polyester Sample 1



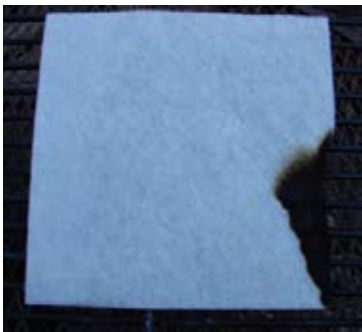
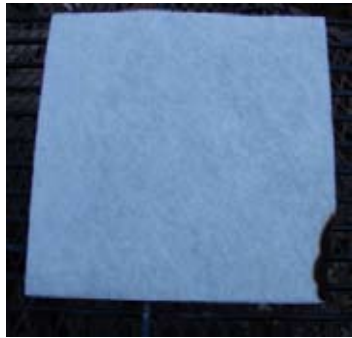
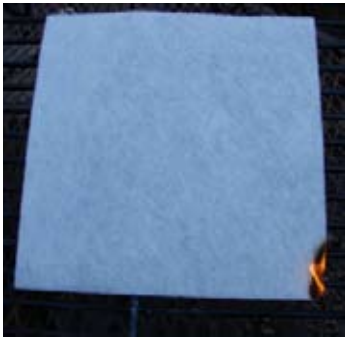
Polyester Sample 2



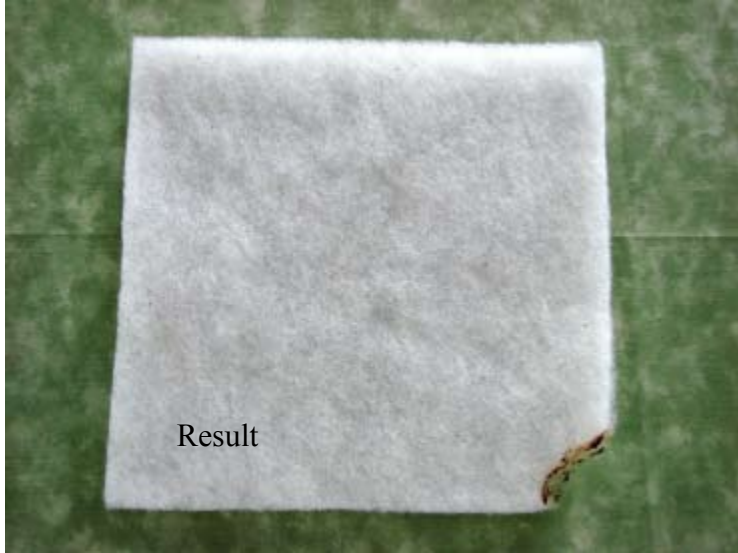
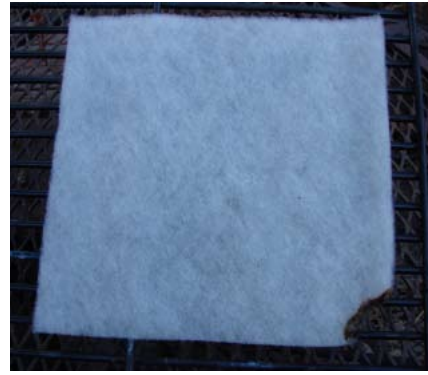
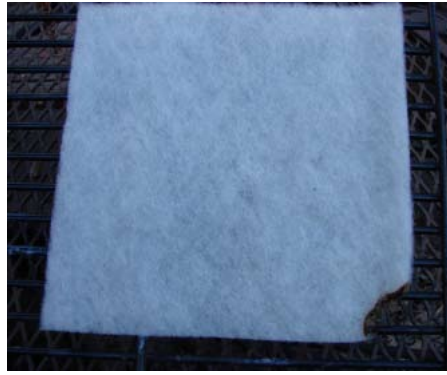
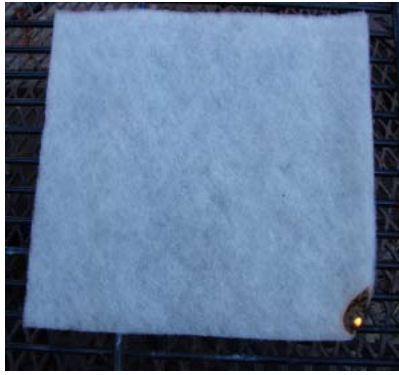
Polyester Sample 3



Silk Sample



Wool Sample



Polyester Burn Melt

