



Verlo Mattress Factory Stores up to challenge of new federal open-flame standard

CFR Part 1633 ... For the layman, this phrase sounds like a component name for an elaborate piece of equipment. But for mattress retailers and manufacturers in the United States, it's a name that is on their minds a lot these days. It's the new federal open-flame standard, which takes effect July 1. The law requires all mattresses to withstand an open flame from two blowtorches for two minutes without bursting into flame and to also remain below a certain temperature for 30 minutes.

"The law is not intended to make mattresses fireproof," Verlo Mattress Factory Stores Vice President Keith Mackey said. "It's intended to give individuals a little more time to get out of the engulfed area to safety. The law is expected to save about 270 lives a year."

The new fire standard will cost mattress manufacturers more than \$100 million per year to implement and is the most expensive change the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission has ever made, according to a report by ConsumerAffairs.com.

Mackey said Verlo Mattress Factory Stores has been preparing for the July 1 date for well over a year and feels Verlo's 60 franchised stores nationwide are ready.

The cost of compliance and ongoing record-keeping measures will be too much for some small companies to absorb, Mackey said. He's confident of Verlo's survival, but he is concerned the codes will be the demise of other small mattress companies.

"They have really been pushed" to meet the new standards, Mackey said, and many will choose to leave this industry entirely.

There are currently only 600 mattress manufacturers in the United States, and the new safety codes could eliminate a third of them.

"The new law certainly calls for stringent action," Mackey said, citing that compliance surveyors from the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) can force retailers/manufacturers to stop assembling and shipping until corrective action is executed.

“Fines are assessed at \$8,000 per violation. Receive a couple violations, and that can mushroom into bankruptcy. Verlo Mattress Factory Stores is taking this very, very seriously,” Mackey said. “We’re doing everything in our power to meet or exceed the new regulations while maintaining our high standard of custom-crafted quality.”

Mackey added that Verlo Mattress Factory Stores has been handcrafting mattresses since 1958, and he and franchise owners will work to ensure Verlo offers customers the same excellent service and exceptional product another half century.

About Verlo Mattress Factory Stores

Headquartered in Fort Atkinson, Wis., Verlo Mattress Factory Stores is the nation’s largest Craftsman-Direct® mattress retailer. Offering the only franchise opportunity in the \$7.7 billion-a-year sleep specialty industry, Verlo Mattress Factory Stores earned a spot in *Entrepreneur Magazine’s* 27th Annual Franchise 500 in 2006. Verlo’s business model sustains the retail framework for custom-built mattresses, ornamental design beds, futon mattresses, assorted futon covers, futon frames, bolsters and pillows.

Currently, Verlo has a highly concentrated retail presence in the Midwest with stores expanding as far west as Colorado and as far south as Florida.

Visit www.verlo.com or www.verlofranchise.com or contact Julie Henningfield, Director of Corporate Communications at 920.568.3103.