# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

## Fire Retardant Inks

**Background:**

Many retail and entertainment facilities hang advertising banners within the public areas. Sponsors and/or vendors often provide these to the facility or entertainment venue. Until recently, many of these banners (which may be quite large) or pennant stringers were fabricated from various materials such as polyethylene or plain fabric.

This can be an issue in a fire situation. These materials will burn readily and in the case of polyethylene drip burning plastic, which could result in fast spread of flame.

Some sponsoring companies who have provided banner and pennant materials to bars and other entertainment venues have taken steps to reduce both the physical conditions for fire spreading as well as liabilities associated with providing these materials to public areas. These sponsoring companies have specified that banners for these uses must meet the latest fire code of the State of California. The code specifies two NFPA test methods to qualify the materials. Simply put, the materials must be self-extinguishing (will not sustain burning) and must not drip any material that is burning.

**Response:**

Flame retarded banner films that meet these codes are available for use, but there is a potential that very heavy films of ink printed on these FR films could, under some conditions, burn as the film drips under burning conditions which would result in a failure under one or both of the NFPA test methods specified by the California Code.

The Braden Sutphin Ink Company entered into a research project to develop lithographic printing inks that would assist customers who need to meet the criteria for display under the California Fire Code. These inks have been designed and developed to maximize the self-extinguishing characteristics required of display banners under the code. They are now available in 4/C process and most “spot” colors. The inks perform similarly to any conventional formulation designed to print on non-porous surfaces and are available in a full range of light fastness levels.

Contact your Braden Sutphin representative for information…….

Rev. 8/2004

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