

The Mattress Fiberglass Check & Fiberglass-Free Buying Guide

A one-page checklist from Embr — an independent, no-affiliate research publication on sleep-environment chemistry. Written by Ken Eyjolfson, 19-year career firefighter.

The one rule that matters most: Don't unzip the outer cover of any mattress unless you're certain it has no fiberglass fire barrier inside. If you're not sure, leave it on. Almost every fiberglass horror story started with someone removing a cover.

Part 1 — Check the mattress you already own (60 seconds)

1. **Find the law tag** — sewn into the side seam, usually near a corner, about the size of an index card.
2. **Read the fill list.** Look for these words:
 - ▲ **"Glass fiber," "fiberglass," "silica fiber," "silica strands"** → your mattress contains fiberglass (usually 5–25%). *"Silica" is the same material under a softer-sounding name.*
 - **"Wool," "rayon," "viscose rayon," "modacrylic," "aramid"** → a non-fiberglass fire barrier. You're fine.
 - **Tag missing or unreadable** → assume it might, and don't unzip. Check the maker's site or ask in writing.
3. **No tag?** Email the manufacturer: *"What is the fire barrier material in [model]? Does it contain fiberglass or glass fiber?"* Save the reply. Silence is its own answer.

Part 2 — If yours has fiberglass (don't panic)

A fiberglass mattress **with the cover intact is not actively shedding fiberglass.** Keep it that way:

- **Leave the outer cover on. Permanently.** Ignore any care instruction that says to remove it for washing — that instruction is the trap at the center of the lawsuits.
 - **For spills, blot from outside** with a damp cloth. If a spill soaks deep, replace rather than open it.
 - **Use a separate, washable mattress protector on top** (\$30–\$80). This is the right way to keep it clean.
 - **When you replace it, dispose carefully** — don't cut it open; use a mattress-recycling program or wrap it in taped plastic sheeting.
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Part 3 — If you've already removed the cover

1. **No regular vacuum, no broom** — both spread fibers. Use a **HEPA vacuum** + damp microfiber mop.
 2. **Wear protection:** N95/P100 respirator, gloves, long sleeves, eye protection (NIOSH guidance).
 3. **Bag the mattress and bedding** in heavy plastic; don't carry uncovered through the house.
 4. **Check your HVAC** — fibers circulate through ductwork and land in rooms the mattress was never in. This is the step people miss.
 5. **Keep kids out** of affected areas until cleanup is done.
 6. **Document everything** (photos, receipts, the care instructions) before cleaning if you might file a claim.
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Part 4 — Buy fiberglass-free (without overpaying)

On the product page, search for: *fire barrier, fire sock, flame barrier*. Brands that skip fiberglass say so loudly. Vague "safe materials" with no specifics = a yellow flag.

Certifications that exclude fiberglass: GOTS · GOLS · MADE SAFE. (*GreenGuard Gold tests emissions but doesn't ban fiberglass.*)

▲ **CertiPUR-US is foam-only** — it says nothing about the fire barrier. A CertiPUR-US mattress can still contain fiberglass.

Price reality (queen):

- Under ~\$400 → fiberglass is very likely (no other fire barrier is economical there).
 - ~\$800–\$1,200 → cheapest documented fiberglass-free / certified-organic options.
 - \$1,800–\$4,000+ → natural latex-and-wool builds.
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Want the full picture? Read the complete guide at embrsleep.com/articles/fiberglass — including what the Nectar and Zinus lawsuits actually allege and what the science does (and doesn't) establish. We take no affiliate commissions on any of this.
