

The Mattress Certification Cheat-Sheet

What the seals actually mean — from Embr, an independent, no-affiliate research publication on sleep-environment chemistry.

The one thing to know: A certification only covers what it says it covers. The most common mistake in mattress shopping is assuming **CertiPUR-US** certifies the whole mattress. It certifies **only the polyurethane foam**.

What CertiPUR-US does cover

The polyurethane **foam component only**, tested by an approved lab:

- No PBDEs, TDCPP, or TCEP (flame retardants)
- Low heavy metals (mercury, lead), formaldehyde, regulated phthalates
- Total VOC emissions **under 0.5 ppm — at 72 hours** (a snapshot of new foam)

What CertiPUR-US does NOT cover

- ▲ **The fire barrier** — so a **CertiPUR-US mattress can still contain fiberglass**
- The cover or fabrics (including any **PFAS** finishes)
- Adhesives
- **Long-term emissions** — how the foam off-gasses warmed by a body over months and years

The seals compared

Certification	What it covers	Key limit
CertiPUR-US	PU foam only	72-hour VOC snapshot; ignores fire barrier & cover
GreenGuard Gold	Emissions of finished product	14-day test (longer than CertiPUR), but doesn't ban fiberglass
OEKO-TEX	Textile components for harmful substances	Component-level, not whole-mattress chemistry
GOTS	Organic textile components (cotton, wool)	Doesn't cover foam
GOLS	Organic latex components	Doesn't cover foam

Certification	What it covers	Key limit
MADE SAFE	The whole finished mattress — broadest	Smaller catalog of certified products

Excludes fiberglass: GOTS, GOLDS, MADE SAFE. (*CertiPUR-US and GreenGuard do not.*)

What to ask before you buy

1. "What is the **fire barrier** material — does it contain fiberglass or glass fiber?"
2. "Is the **cover** treated with any stain-resist or PFAS finish?"
3. "What does your certification cover — the **foam only**, or the finished mattress?"

A brand that answers plainly is telling you something. So is one that won't.

Full breakdown — what each test actually measures and where the gaps are — at embrsleep.com/articles/certipur. We take no affiliate commissions.
