

To: Whom It May Concern
From: Dave Panning (dpanning@bifma.org)
Date: February 3, 2016

Subject: **BIFMA Position – Chair Weight Limits / Load Ratings**

Chair manufacturers often make claims of the weight capacity or a load rating of their chairs. The BIFMA Seating Subcommittee cautions against weight limit claims that are based on simple static load tests that do not represent actual use conditions and do not encompass dynamic forces. The ANSI/BIFMA standards are based on user behaviors (including dynamic forces) and the environment, not solely on the weight of users. Because of these reasons, there is not a BIFMA ‘load-rating’ methodology.

The Scope of BIFMA Seating Standards indicates that a certain percentile human body weights were used in the development of the various standards. This does not mean that users with weights above the percentiles referenced in the standards cannot safely or comfortably use a chair developed to a given BIFMA standard. As users get very large, however, the size of the chair as well as the capacity must be increased. Users with weights above the listed percentile may affect the life of the chair, and comfort may be compromised.

Some BIFMA members have recently tested general-purpose chairs with static loads of 1,000 lbs. or more. Although these chairs support the load, they know that a dynamic force created by a user of this size could be catastrophic. Responsible manufacturers would never make a user weight recommendation of 1,000 lbs. for a General-Purpose Chair based solely on static loading, knowing the limitations of dynamic use.

When making buying decisions BIFMA cautions purchasers against using load-rating claims only. Such ratings alone are misleading and will not be indicative of the life or strength of the chair. Look for compliance to one of the ANSI/BIFMA standards as they are comprehensive and incorporate a wide variety of test use conditions, including the weight of occupants.

Current BIFMA seating standards:

ANSI/BIFMA X5.1-2011 General-Purpose Office Chairs – Tests

ANSI/BIFMA X5.4-2012 Lounge and Public Seating – Tests

ANSI/BIFMA X5.11-2015 Large Occupant General-Purpose Office Chairs – Test

ANSI/BIFMA X6.1-2012 Educational Seating – Tests

BIFMA wishes to thank the following individuals of the X5.1 Revision team for their input:

Jeff Sendlak	Bureau Veritas	Steve Trinkel	Kimball International
Tom Rademaker	Consultant	Lance Bosgieter	Lifetime
Doneta Barron	Elite Group	Mitch Johnson	Lifetime
David Durian	Elite Group	Jennifer Law	Marsh
Josh Kerst	Focal Upright Furniture	Bill Fitzgerald	Meco
Ray Mohamed	Global Group	Glen Luttrell	Meco
Stefania Crum	GSA	Remi Charbonneau	Micom
Teresa Bellingar	Haworth Inc.	John Knust	National Office Furniture
Tom Dykstra	Haworth Inc.	Dr. Harvey West	North Carolina State
Desmond Noteboom	Haworth Inc.	Scott Hasenour	OFS Brands
Randy Ruster	Herman Miller Inc.	Matthew McGarrity	SGS
David Verstraete	Herman Miller Inc.	Melissa DuBuis	Steelcase, Inc.
Robert Janson	High Point Furniture	Jeff Musculus	Steelcase, Inc.
Dan Tracy	HON	Charles Choo	Teknion
Chris Zorich	HON	Bruce Bohren	UL
Brian Kneibel	Intertek	Brian Truelove	UL
Anthony Serge	Intertek	Doug Woodard	UL
Tim Hornberger	KI	Jerry Nichols	Versteel
Jon Eckerle	Kimball International	Robert Hupe	Virco

Please contact the Director of Technical Services at BIFMA should there be any questions.

Dec. 29, 2014 – Initial memo.

Feb. 3, 2016 – ‘could be catastrophic’ was ‘would be catastrophic’