

BIFMA Compliant: Next-Level Confidence in Furniture Specification & Procurement

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Great news! Identifying products that meet established industry standards recently became a whole lot easier and faster. First, a bit of background.

The cornerstone of the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA) is standards development. As an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited standards developer, BIFMA sponsors the development and maintenance of several ANSI/BIFMA standards. These safety and durability standards cover different types of seating, desks, tables, panels and storage. Some have been around for decades while others are fairly new.

ANSI/BIFMA Safety and Durability Standards

ANSI/BIFMA X5.1	General Purpose Office Chairs
ANSI/BIFMA X5.4	Public and Lounge Seating
ANSI/BIFMA X5.41	Large Occupant Public and Lounge Seating
ANSI/BIFMA X5.5	Desk and Table Products
ANSI/BIFMA X5.6	Panel Systems
ANSI/BIFMA X5.9	Storage Units
ANSI/BIFMA X5.11	General Purpose Large Occupant Office Chairs
ANSI/BIFMA X6.1	Educational Seating
ANSI/BIFMA X6.4	Occasional Use Seating
ANSI/SOHO S6.5	Small Office/Home Office*

*A title change is in process to reflect content, which is home office and occasional use desks, tables and storage products.

Each standard includes relevant tests and minimum acceptance levels. An example of a test in the seating standards is the Backrest Strength Test. It is used to evaluate the ability of the chair to withstand stresses such as those caused by the user exerting a rearward force on the backrest of the chair. Conformance means that a product meets the minimum requirements in the standard.

ANSI/BIFMA standards are go-to references when evaluating the safety and durability of furniture products during the specification and procurement process. Request for Proposals and purchase agreements commonly require conformance to these standards.



Historically, there has not been a formal mechanism for manufacturers to make claims of conformance or for specifiers and buyers to identify products that conform to these standards. In the last few years, BIFMA made great strides in structuring a process by developing and publishing BIFMA PC-2020 Product Conformance Requirements. This document provides the minimum requirements that must be followed for assessing a product to an ANSI/BIFMA standard and for making a conformance claim.

Requirements include:

- Product shall meet the most recent version of the applicable ANSI/BIFMA standard.
- Product shall be assessed in an ISO 17025 accredited lab, meaning that the lab has demonstrated that it operates competently and generates valid results.
- Manufacturer shall maintain an up-to-date library of test reports to support declarations of conformance.



The newest milestone was the launch of the BIFMA Compliant Program in March 2021. This voluntary test report verification program enables manufacturers to register products with BIFMA that conform to ANSI/BIFMA standards per PC-2020. These products then appear in the publicly accessible BIFMA Compliant registry, which is easily searchable by product name, brand or category.

ergoCentric is a proud participant in this exciting new program. Check us out in the registry and look for the BIFMA Compliant mark in our product information materials for next-level confidence in products you can trust!



About Lucy Hart

Lucy Hart, MSc, CCPE, WELL AP is the Director, Workplace Ergonomics and Well-being for ergoCentric. She engages influencers and decision-makers to understand the relationship between ergonomics, well-being and the built environment, provides strategic guidance and technical leadership throughout the furniture life cycle and actively contributes to standards development. Lucy chairs both the CSA Z412 Office Ergonomics Technical Committee and BIFMA Ergonomics Subcommittee. She is also a Member of the WELL Movement Concept Advisory and the IWH Educationally Influential Ergonomist Network.