

AFRDI Product Certification

Introduction

Furntech-AFRDI operates a system of quality certification for furniture and furniture components with the aim of lifting quality, strength, durability, safety, suitability for purpose and, ultimately, sustainability through increased product durability.

The Scheme is performance and test based, the criteria selected to allow manufacturers and designers as much freedom as possible to develop new products and concepts. The objective was to create a program incorporating robust performance requirements to:

- highlight the best quality furniture;
- give confidence to specifiers and users; and
- provide suppliers and retailers with a valuable marketing tool.

Operation

The AFRDI Certification Scheme is based on the results of performance testing of representative samples of product provided by the supplier. If a product meets the certification requirements set by Furntech-AFRDI it is eligible to be marketed bearing the "Furntech-AFRDI" label or swing tag, or to be advertised as meeting the relevant Furntech-AFRDI Certification requirements.

Suppliers must be prepared to enter into an agreement with the Institute that they will comply with the terms of the Certification Scheme. These terms are designed to protect both Furntech-AFRDI and the supplier.

The text of the Certification Agreement is available on request. A brief summary of the Program follows. The supplier agrees to:

- maintain quality of the product to at least that of the sample/s tested;
- advise of changes in the product including changes in materials, components and means and place of manufacture, prior to the modified product being brought to the market (and in sufficient time to allow product retesting, if required);
- not use (nor permit its agents to use) the logo to promote goods which are not covered by the agreement or to misrepresent the nature of Furntech-AFRDI's endorsement;
- keep and make available a register of complaints arising from the sale of goods covered by the agreement;

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- submit goods for audit/investigation at least every three years or, if required, retest when standards change;
- agree to random checks (or targeted checks where there is reasonable cause) of the quality of products covered by the licence agreement;
- maintain an adequate product liability insurance cover; and
- pay the required licence fee.

In return, Furntech-AFRDI agrees to:

- permit the use of the appropriate AFRDI logo to promote goods covered by the agreement; and
- to commend goods covered by the agreement in lists published on our website.

Certification Criteria

The Institute has clearly defined certification criteria for various items of furniture and furniture components. These are continually being expanded to meet demand.

The criteria generally include requirements for:

- (i) strength
- (ii) durability
- (iii) stability
- (iv) function e.g. fitness for purpose (usually including ergonomic and basic safety criteria)
- (v) flammability (where appropriate)
- (vi) reasonable finish and workmanship

The performance criteria adopted for Certification are usually based on Australian and New Zealand standards, or AFRDI standards, or – where these are not available or relevant – on other well recognised standards, such as ISO, British, CEN, BIFMA or ASTM, for example. In some instances where none of these exist, we may develop a set of customised requirements. Whichever route to certification is taken each of the requirements listed above must be met to our satisfaction.

Sometimes there are several levels of performance criteria available to the product supplier within the certification classification. For example, office and contract chairs may conform with up to three test levels for strength and durability depending on the severity of the intended final use. Typical performance levels are:

- (a) Level 4 basic commercial applications
- (b) Level 5 heavy commercial and industrial
- (c) Level 6 severe commercial and heavy industrial

Published by Furntech-AFRDI, the Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute, an independent not-for-profit technical organisation serving furniture buyers and sellers in Australia and New Zealand.

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An additional level of certification performance is now available for some products viz., *Rated Load*. These products have been explicitly certified as appropriate for use by people up to a specified mass (typically toward the upper extreme of the population mass distribution).

Initial Testing & Assessment

Furntech-AFRDI will undertake the necessary inspections, assessments and tests. Test reports issued by other laboratories with relevant ISO Guide 25 or ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation may be accepted although it is necessary for the products covered by such certificates to be inspected and undergo some confirmation testing ([Test Reports from Other Laboratories](#)).

The results of these tests and evaluations are then discussed with the supplier, particularly if some unusual result is obtained. On completion of the evaluation, the supplier will be issued with a report detailing the results of all relevant tests and inspections. All evaluations conducted by Furntech are undertaken in the strictest confidence.

Certification Agreement & Fee

Before an item can be marketed with the AFRDI swing tag or label, and before it can be advertised as meeting Furntech-AFRDI Certification requirements, the supplier must enter into a certification agreement with the Institute.

The certification/licence fee is used to fund the:

- (a) random audits of the product covered by each list of endorsed products;
- (b) investigation of complaints about quality and deceptive conduct; and
- (c) listing on Furntech's website.

Swing Tags and Promotional Material

Once a product is certified, the supplier is entitled to attach the AFRDI Certification label or swing tag. Swing tags and labels are available from Furntech-AFRDI in agreed minimum quantities. Alternatively, licensees may, subject to the Institute's written approval, incorporate the certification details in their own product data. In this case, the Institute would need to see and approve the final printed documentation.

The Institute has registered a number of logos and product certification marks to protect the interests of consumers and of those suppliers making use of the service.

Period of Validity

The period of the Certification depends upon the product and is specified in the licence agreement. Generally certification is valid for a period of three years subject to payment of the licence fee and satisfactory performance in on-going audits. AFRDI 146 Leather is valid for one year only.

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