

AFRDI Approved Chair – So What?

AFRDI Approved office chairs are tested to the Australian New Zealand standard. This is based on European standards and in some ways is even tougher – chairs that comply with AS/NZS 4438 are ergonomically sound, tough, durable and safe

Ergonomically Sound

Ninety percent of the population – everyone other than the shortest 5 percent and the tallest 5 percent – should be able to adjust an AFRDI Approved chair to provide a comfortable work seat. The standard sets out a range of adjustments required for seat height, seat tilt, lumbar support and arm heights.

Tough

Chairs are measured using a special 64kg 'dummy buttocks' that takes into account the compression of seat foams and gas springs.

The effects of 'normal abuse' are reflected in the standard with a range of forces being applied ten times for 10 seconds each –

- Someone standing on the chair (160kg for Level 4 and 200kg for Level 6)
- Someone sitting on the arm (90kg for Level 4 and 120kg for Level 6, and there is a test for pulling the arms outwards as well)

To simulate rough treatment, the chair is dropped 10 times onto one leg (from a height of 300mm for Level 4 or 450mm for Level 6). In other tests a special 25kg weight is dropped five times onto the seat (from 240mm for Level 4 and 350mm for Level 6), and a 6.5kg hammer is swung through an arc of 1m onto the sides of the arms and the back of the chair.

Durable

Machines are used to simulate someone sitting on the chair, performing about 25,000 'sits' per day, non-stop.

- For Level 4 there are 100,000 sits performed with a seat load of 95kg. That is the equivalent of a user sitting on the chair 5 times every hour over a 38 hour week, for 52 weeks a year, over a ten year period.
- Level 6 is even tougher – 200,000 sits with the equivalent of a person weighing 120kg.

The durability of the action, the castors and the swivel mechanism are tested separately.

Safe

The standard includes a requirement that there be no features that can cut or trap the user or anyone else in the vicinity of the chair – something that home office users with children might appreciate. There are tests for stability as well.

The Blue Tick means that It's Independently verified

The Australasian Furnishing Research & Development Institute (known as AFRDI or Furntech) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation whose Blue Tick logo is a registered certification mark. Not only do the chairs have to comply with the standard, the supplier must agree to have their brochures and production checked on an on-going basis. Further information is available from Furntech at www.furntech.org.au or (03) 6326 6155