BIFMA Standards During and After COVID-19

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Suggestions for the improvement of this Guideline are welcome. The suggestions should be sent to email@bifma.org or BIFMA, 678 Front Avenue NW, Suite 150, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. Suggestions will be reviewed by leaders of the BIFMA Engineering Committee.

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Furniture stakeholders are expressing interest in the applicability of BIFMA Standards and Guides during the COVID-19 pandemic. How do the BIFMA Standards and Guides assist with the work from home community? What about the transition back to the office?

Below is a brief summary of the BIFMA safety and performance Standards and Guides and how they may apply during these unique times.

Brief Description of BIFMA Standards

(more information available at https://www.bifma.org/page/standardsoverview)

1. BIFMA HCF 8.1-2019 Health Care Furniture Design Guidelines For Cleanability

BIFMA first introduced this Guide in 2014 with significant input from many health care professionals. It was updated in 2017 and again in 2019. This Guideline contains many cleaning agents which are on the CDC / EPA list of disinfectants for COVID-19. Obviously, there is a lot of interest in this Guide right now which is why we list it first. This Guide discusses typical cleaners along with UV and Steam. In addition, are product performance tests. You may obtain a copy of the Guideline here. BIFMA Members may obtain for free through their member profile.

2. ANSI/SOHO S6.5-2008(R2013) Small Office/Home Office

We list this second given all the interest conveyed to BIFMA about the Home Office. This ANSI standard covers desk, table, and storage furniture primarily designed for use in small office, home office, and residential environments. Note – This standard is in revision with a proposed name change to: X6.5 Home Office & Light-use Office: Storage, Desk and Table Products.

3. ANSI/BIFMA X5.6-2016 Panel Systems

And third is an uptick in interest in Panels to separate office employees. This ANSI standard covers the performance requirements for panel systems, screens, panel supported systems, and various hang-on components.

4. ANSI/BIFMA X5.5-2014 Desk / Table Products

This ANSI standard covers commercial desks and tables, including height adjustable tables. It also offers several tests for Monitor Arms. Note that this does also provide guidance for testing screens which are used to separate employees in conjunction with a worksurface.

5. BIFMA G1-2013 Ergonomics Guideline for Furniture Used in Office Work Spaces Designed for Computer Use

This Guide should be carefully considered for those employees working frequently from home and doing computer work.

6. BIFMA X6.4-2018 Occasional-Use Seating

There is growing interest in this standard for those working at least some of the time from home. This standard is similar to ANSI/BIFMA X5.4 (below) except the durability test cycles are reduced for products that may experience less frequent use or a reduced life expectation.

7. ANSI/BIFMA X5.9-2019 Storage Units
This ANSI standard provides test methods for freestanding, mobile, and wall-mounted storage units. Note that this does also provide guidance for testing privacy screens which are used to separate employees in conjunction with a storage unit.

8. ANSI/BIFMA X5.1-2017 General-purpose Office Seating
This ANSI standard should be considered for the full time at home or office worker. Examples of seating categories include but are not limited to: executive/management, task/secretarial, side/guest chairs, nesting and/or folding chairs.

9. ANSI/BIFMA X5.11-2015 General-purpose Large Occupant Office Seating
Same as above except for the larger segment of the population, based on the 400 pound occupant.

10. ANSI/BIFMA X6.1-2018 Educational Seating
This ANSI standard is typically used for seating products that are primarily designed for use in schools (K-12) and colleges/universities. It includes chair-desks, tablet-arm products, convertible bench/tables. Three sizes of chairs based on seat height are covered; the small and medium sizes may be more suitable for K-6 environments catering to smaller users. The large size is based on the same 95th percentile male body weight typically used in other seating standards. This standard should be considered also for the rise in the home school movement.

11. ANSI/BIFMA X5.4-2020 Public and Lounge Seating
This ANSI Standard is primarily designed for use in indoor common or shared spaces such as: waiting, reception, patient rooms, restaurant / dining / cafeteria settings, and other gathering areas. Public seating includes products with single or multiple seat units, arena folding chairs, and standard folding chairs. This standard should be considered for home office environments that accommodate multi-seat units.

12. ANSI/BIFMA X7.1-2011(R2016) Standard for Formaldehyde and TVOC Emissions
Provides industry approved emissions requirements for low-emitting seating and office furniture products. This standard is appropriate for home office requirements, particularly when used full-time.

13. ANSI/BIFMA e3-2019 Furniture Sustainability
Provides measurable market-based definitions and establishes performance criteria for increasingly sustainable furniture. LEVEL is the conformance mark for furniture products that have been third-party certified to the e3 standard. A comprehensive database of certified products is at: http://www.levelcertified.org/.