

To: Whom It May Concern
From: Anthony Serge, Technical Director of Safety and Performance (aserge@bifma.org)
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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 chair manufacturers have tested chairs with static loads of 1,000 lbs. or more. Although these chairs support the load, a dynamic force created by a user of this size could be catastrophic.

Manufacturers should never make a user weight recommendation based solely on static loading.

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 X5.41-2021 Large Occupant Public and Lounge Seating

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

ANSI/BIFMA X6.4-2021 Occasional-Use Seating