

Blue Tick Product Certification

Introduction

Furntech-AFRDI operates a national system of quality certification for furniture, furniture components, and related products and materials, with the aim of lifting quality and longevity, safety, suitability for purpose and ultimately, benefiting sustainability through conservation of resources.

The Scheme is performance and test based, the criteria being selected to allow manufacturers and designers as much freedom as possible to develop new products and concepts. The objective has been to align the program with the quality requirements now prevailing in the global market, while also being responsive to emerging challenges, such as sustainability. The Scheme highlights the quality of the furniture; provides suppliers and retailers with a valuable marketing tool; and gives confidence to specifiers and users in complementing risk management strategies.

Operation

The Blue Tick Certification Scheme is based on the results of performance, function and safety tests coupled with an evaluation of the quality and finish of a representative sample of product provided by the supplier. If a product meets the 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 requirement.

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 standard 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 tested;
- advise of changes in the product including changes in materials, components and means and place of manufacture;
- 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;
- submit goods for audit/investigation every three years or, if required, retest when standards change;

Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute

An independent, not-for-profit technical organisation serving buyers and sellers of furniture in
Australia and New Zealand PO Box 2042 Launceston Tasmania 7250,
Ph 03 6326 6155 Fax 03 6326 3090 Email info@furntech.org.au

Furntech-AFRDI Blue Tick Product Certification Program Outline

- agree to random checks 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 AFRDI logo in blue or black 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 criteria for various items of furniture and furniture components and materials. This is continually being expanded to meet demand.

The criteria specified take into account:

- (i) function e.g. fitness for purpose including ergonomic criteria
- (ii) strength and durability
- (iii) stability
- (iv) flammability
- (v) safety and occupational health criteria
- (vi) finish and workmanship

The performance criteria adopted for Certification is based on Australian and New Zealand standards where they are available or on ISO or CEN standards so that the approved products can be directly compared with that of mature international markets.

Where Australian, ISO or CEN standards are not available or relevant then other well recognised standards, such as British, BIFMA, ASTM, etc. have been used as the basis of the certification requirements. In some instances where none of these exist, we use AFRDI standards.

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

Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute

An independent, not-for-profit technical organisation serving buyers and sellers of furniture in Australia and New Zealand PO Box 2042 Launceston Tasmania 7250,
Ph 03 6326 6155 Fax 03 6326 3090 Email info@furntech.org.au

Initial Testing & Assessment

Furntech 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, undergo some confirmation testing ([Test Reports from Other Laboratories](#)) and, if approved for endorsement, marked and returned to the supplier for retention.

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 fee is used to fund:

- (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 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 the AFRDI blue box with white tick motif as a "Certification Trademark" 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.