

**Government of Canada releases its long awaited Request for Supply Agreements For Office Seating (E60PQ-120001/B) and allows outdated test reports to be used to establish product compliance.**

Would you buy a chair based on a 20 year old test report?

On April 17<sup>th</sup> PWGSC released its Request for Supply Agreement (RFSa) for office chairs on Merx. It is important for you to review this document **even if you do not sell chairs to the Government** but sell other types of furniture as they **will follow the same pattern for the other furniture categories.**

The RFSa document presents 2 product specifications: one for office & conference chairs, PD-8, and one for side chairs, GPD-6. Both specifications contain identical testing requirements (section 10 in either document). This section gives the possibility of qualifying chairs either by using BIFMA X 5.1 2002 or 2011. Historically PWGSC required that test reports no older than 5 years be submitted to establish product compliance. They also had the additional requirement that should a standard change, the industry had 9 months to re-test their products.

In the current RFSa, **there is no such requirement anymore** which means that somebody could use a test report done in 2002 and use it to establish his product compliance today. Furthermore, this contract is open ended which means that if PWGSC was to use the Supply Agreement (SA) for 10 years, the test report used to establish certification would be outdated by many years. This should be unacceptable to all involved.

This will potentially have a **negative impact** on what was a level playing field that both the government and the industry have been striving to maintain over the years.

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Failing to require a reasonable testing cycle deprives the Government from ensuring acceptable product performance from suppliers. What is worst? A manufacturer that fails short of meeting one environmental criteria or chairs that fail prematurely in the field because of poor product quality and end up in the dumpster?

Section 2.1 of the RFSA document (p. 8) indicates a supplier's conference will be held in Gatineau on May 8, 2013 at 09:00 where the industry can discuss its issues.

The industry should try to overturn this change in testing requirements by PWGSC as this will be detrimental to both the Industry and the Government. You can send questions about your concerns by e-mail to Mrs. Francine Frigon at: [Francine.frigon@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca](mailto:Francine.frigon@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca).

As usual, should you have any questions, please feel free to call or e-mail me.

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