

Stability Verified

AHFA/UL Partnership Makes Compliant Furniture Easy to Identify

HIGH POINT, N.C. - Four case goods companies have successfully completed the new Stability Verified program developed by UL (Underwriters Laboratory) in partnership with the American Home Furnishings Alliance (AHFA).

The Stability Verified program is open exclusively to AHFA members through the end of 2018. In January 2019, UL will open enrollment to the industry.

Ashley Furniture, Hooker Furniture, Samson Marketing and Sauder Woodworking served as pilot sites for the program. All completed the requirements this month. Some will have Stability Verified products available online or in retail stores as early as November.



The Stability Verified mark identifies products that meet the requirements of the latest version of the industry's voluntary stability standard for clothing storage furniture, ASTM F2057. Participating manufacturers complete two program components before being authorized to place the mark on qualified products.

First, UL reviews and verifies a company's in-house stability testing process. The assessment confirms that the company has the testing facilities, trained personnel, test methods and record-keeping in place to verify that products pass the stability requirements of ASTM F2057. Companies also must have a corrective action process in place for identifying, modifying and retesting any products that fail the stability tests required by the standard.

Second, UL reviews and approves the company's product test data, establishing that the units are eligible to carry the "Product Stability Verified" mark. All critical design components for the covered products are documented, and UL repeats stability testing on sample units at the factory to confirm compliance.

Both program components require a visit from UL once per year to ensure all program requirements continue to be met. Data from participating companies, including a list of all products eligible to carry the "Product Stability Verified" mark, are accessible to consumers on UL's Verify website: <https://verify.ul.com>.

"Each of the four pilot companies completed the program requirements in about four to six weeks," explained AHFA Vice President of Regulatory Affairs Bill Perdue. "Now that the program and all processes within it have been tested, we expect future participants will be able to complete the requirements in three to four weeks."

"Many consumer advocacy organizations have highlighted the idea that consumers have no way of

knowing if they are buying clothing storage units designed to meet the ASTM F2057 safety standard,” explained Amy Kruse, Director of Product Safety and Improvement for Sauder Woodworking. “The Stability Verified program will do exactly that. Sauder Woodworking is excited to be one of the first companies to provide Stability Verified safety information to the consumer, as well as to satisfy the concerns from those consumer organizations,” she said.

“It can be difficult for shoppers to distinguish between furniture that has been designed and tested (to the ASTM F2057 standard) to prevent tip over ... versus that which has not,” said Harrison Toms, Manager of Product Compliance for Hooker Furniture. “This new Stability Verified UL label hopefully will help salespeople and consumers recognize the furniture that has been designed for better stability. Ultimately, we hope this will help consumers purchase safer products.”

UL has established a two-tiered annual fee for the program, with the first tier covering process verification and the second tier covering product verification at a single factory location. Additional factory locations can be added for an additional fee. AHFA members receive a discount on these program fees.

“UL’s verification program allows companies to differentiate their products in the marketplace by providing science-based confirmation of product claims,” explained Michael O’Hara, director of UL’s global furniture business. “The Stability Verified program endorsed by AHFA will help furniture consumers understand the meaning and significance of the voluntary furniture stability standard.”

The ASTM furniture stability standard was established in 2000. It was updated in 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2017. Another revision - this one establishing different warning labels for media chests versus other clothing storage units - is expected to be finalized this year.

The standard requires clothing storage furniture to be engineered for stability. Compliant pieces pass two stability tests, carry a permanent warning label and are shipped to the consumer with tip restraints and instructions for installing them.

To pass the first stability test, an empty unit must not tip when doors, if any, are opened 90 degrees, and all drawers are fully extended to the “stop.” (In absence of a “stop,” drawers are opened two-thirds of the way.) To pass the second test, the empty piece must not tip when one drawer is open and a 50-pound weight is gradually applied to the front edge of the open drawer. The piece must pass this second test in the same manner for each drawer and door in the unit. The 50-pound weight is intended to simulate the weight of an average five-year-old (60-month) child.

“This program lets the consumer know that the product meets the industry standard for stability ... The end consumer is and should be the real winner,” stated Mike Lazorchick, Director of Quality and Compliance for Samson Marketing. “The program not only helps consumers find safer products, but it also helps us improve our standards as a company, and it will help the industry overall.”

For information on enrolling your company in the Stability Verified program, contact Michael O’Hara at Michael.J.Ohara@ul.com.