

"Residential Seating is Not Safe Enough for Commercial or Hospitality Use"

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Many restaurants, independent hotels and timeshare resorts have much tighter budgets these days when it comes to purchasing seating for their properties. At the same time, there seem to be many “attractive” options available for their chairs, bar stools and benches. For example, there are many online seating sources and retailer showrooms which offer somewhat trendy designs, at very affordable prices.

BUT BUYERS BEWARE...

Our expert witness firm, being retained throughout the country to support all sides of chair related injury cases, has seen far too many serious incidents directly caused by the end users and even some of their outside interior designers, furniture dealers or purchasing firms, making poor budget driven decisions, when selecting seating products.

Many people consider seating as somewhat of a commodity item, i.e. it's made of wood or metal, has arms or is armless and has four legs with a seat and back. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Safe commercial or hospitality seating design involves many critical steps between initial drawings, engineering, testing, production and delivery to the end user location.

One major consideration when it comes to determining if seating will be safe for long term commercial or hospitality use is proper frame engineering and performance testing. The difference between residential and commercial furniture can be condensed down into a few simple points. How many times will a chair be used in someone's kitchen over a period of 5 to 10 years...versus how many times it will be used in that same 5 to 10 years in a restaurant, hotel or timeshare resort? And not only the continuous customer heavy use, but also the continual moving around, cleaning and maintenance processes to which this seating will be subjected.

It is basically all about construction and technical specifications. Designing, manufacturing and evaluating commercial or hospitality seating cannot be done on a quick "hit or miss" type basis. The persons or entities responsible for producing,

marketing and selecting commercial seating MUST HAVE the proper hands-on knowledge, field performance experience and technical expertise to confidently offer safe and durable seating to assure a reasonable level of safety for the intended range of end users (i.e. sizes, ages, weights, levels of mobility) and specifically how the seating will be actually used and maintained over time.

Commercial seating must be built with heavier duty materials, which will of course cost more than lighter weight, thinner materials (whether it is wood or metal). Assuring the ongoing safety of your customers requires that these various factors be seriously evaluated before making the final specification and purchasing decisions.

We have unfortunately been involved in too many cases where decision makers for commercial or hospitality businesses were not properly qualified or did not have enough hands-on seating experience to truly determine which products would offer their customers a reasonable degree of ongoing safety while on their premises.