

The European Directive 2001/95/EC on the *general product safety (GPSD)* has as its main purpose to ensure that products placed on the market are safe. It is considered an “horizontal” directive: it sets the general scope and objective; each Member State must ensure its application by their own legislative tools. In Italy, the *Consumer Code* (Legislative Decree No. 206/2005) is the Italian legislative tool that harmonises the regulations concerning the purchasing and consumption processes, in order to ensure a high level of protection for the safety and health of consumers on the national territory. Within its *Part II*, which concerns education, information, commercial practices and advertising, *Title II* deals with the **minimum content of information** that must always be present in accompanying the product, including **instructions for the use**.



How and what to write in the instructions for use?

We find the answer in the technical standards.

As far as the furniture sector, the most of the requirement standards contain in fact a specific clause referring to the instructions for use too: a guideline on the contents to be developed to properly inform the user about an appropriate use of the product.

This clause becomes a compliant verification step to all effects.

To obtain compliance with the standard, **this verification step must also be successfully passed**.

The common points on the instructions for use included in all the reference standards of our sector are listed below:

- shall be available in the language of the country in which it will be delivered to the end user;
- shall be contain information regarding the intended use (number of standard, level passed and examples of end-use);
- shall be contain assembly instructions, where applicable;
- shall be contain instruction for the care and maintenance of the product;
- shall be contain instruction for operating the adjusting mechanisms, where applicable;
- shall be contain information on the choice of castors in relation to the floor surface, where applicable;
- shall be contain warnings indicating that only instructed personnel may replace and maintain adjustment mechanisms, for instance containing energy accumulators, where applicable.

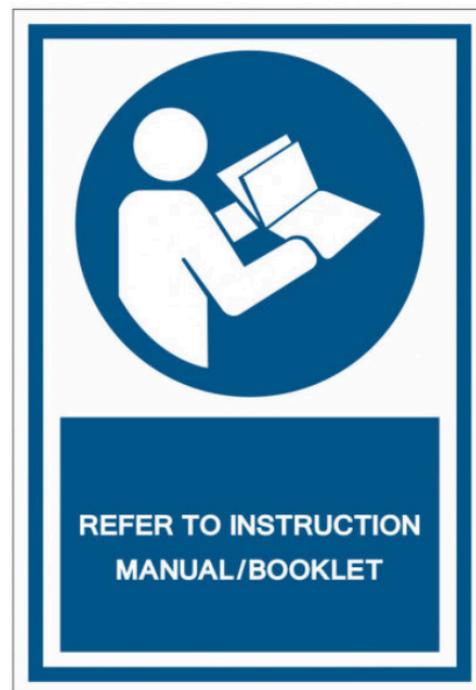
In detail, **each standard has additional and specific requests:**

in the case of *office work chair* (EN 1335-2) and *work tables* (EN 527-2):

- shall be contained information regarding possible adjustments, also using images;

in the case of *seating and tables for outdoor* (EN 581):

- shall be headed "IMPORTANT, RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE: READ CAREFULLY" in letters no less than 5 mm high, unless if the following information are permanently marked on the product;
- shall be contain name and address of the manufacturer/supplier/retailer;
- shall be contain warning indicating that a parasol shall always be used with a suitable base for tables which have a hole for a parasol, but which are not intended to support a parasol alone;



in the case of *chairs and tables for educational institutions* (EN 1729-1), they can be given affixed to the furniture, on a label, in a leaflet or in the instructions for use:

- shall be contain the size mark reference;
- shall be contain instructions on how to adjust the furniture to fit a specific group of pupils;
- shall be contain information on how to operate the adjustments and information on how to recognize correct settings and therefore a good posture;

in the case of *domestic and kitchen storage units and kitchen-worktops* (EN 14749):

- installation shall be carried out exactly according to the manufacturer's instructions, otherwise a safety risk can occur if incorrectly installed; a warning shall be given to the consumer to notify them of related risks;
- where there are no open stops for the extension element, information shall be provided about the potential risk of extension element can be pulled out of the unit;
- in the case of self-assembly furniture is required the list of parts supplied, the list of tools required and the diagram of the bolts and other fastenings.

Finally, we close with the *bunk beds and the children's furniture*. The standards relating to these products (EN 747-1 bunk beds, EN 716-1 children's cots, EN 1130 cribs, EN 16890 mattresses for cots and cribs, EN 14988 children's high chairs and EN 17191 seating for children), put more attention to the instructions for use: in this case the requirements of control for conformity of instructions are very articulated and detailed with specific warnings and precautions for use, this is due precisely to the condition of "fragility" and vulnerability of the end user (the infant and/or child).

For these and the other products of furniture, CATAS test activity always provides, in addition to the usual mechanical tests in the laboratory, also the documentary control of the draft instructions developed by the customer.

Contact us for more information on the requirements that the product technical standards also provide for this important information tool.

Don't miss the next issue of our newsletter: we will continue to talk about instructions for use for furniture products, with a practical example!



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