

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
Product Recognition Program

Report of the review of the Handybar



Available online at www.caot.ca/productrecognition



Report last updated October 2015

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Specific questions related to this product(s) (including usage, availability, pricing, etc.) should be addressed directly to the manufacturer and/or distributor (contact info of the distributor). Concerns or questions related to the content of this report should be addressed to Julie Lapointe, Director of Professional Practice, at jlapointe@caot.ca or at 1(800) 434-2268 ext. 260

The conclusions presented in the current report are derived from the best information available. In the case that new information becomes available and grants a modification to the conclusions, CAOT reserves the right to update and issue a new report of this product at any time.

Acknowledgement

The generation of this report would not have been possible without the contribution of occupational therapists and members of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT).



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Executive Summary

This document presents the results of the review committee for the Handybar. This product answers to the need some people may have for better hand support while getting in and out of the car. All CAOT reviewers would recommend the use of the Handybar for the aforementioned purpose. Good upper body strength is required to use this device effectively and the device needs to be properly secured in the vehicle anchors in order to be used safely. The robustness of the product has been judged excellent by our panel of reviewers. Ideas to enhance instructions related to the use of the Handybar have been generated through this review and are summarized in a table format. Reviewers were unanimous and would recommend that the Handybar be accepted for the CAOT product recognition program.

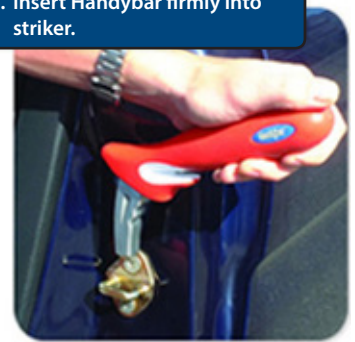


The Handybar is recognized by CAOT.

1. Locate U-shaped striker on door frame.



2. Insert Handybar firmly into striker.



3. Use as support.





Review report

The purpose of this product

For some people, rising up from sitting to standing can be particularly challenging. The Handybar helps people who have difficulty getting in and out of a car due to transient or permanent physical challenges (i.e. sensori-motor deficits). The Handybar, when properly secured in the U-shape anchor of the car's door, might increase the safety and the facility of performing the sitting to standing movement.

Target groups

The Handybar is intended for people with mobility limitations. This can comprise people with chronic or transient health conditions such as people recovery from an injury or a surgery or expectant mothers.

Performance of the product (efficacy, usability, safety, reliability, durability)

All reviewers would recommend the use of the Handybar for the purpose of supporting people when getting in and out of their car. This product seems effective in preventing injuries such as falls and will help people with mobility problems. One reviewer said that it might not be easy for some users, particularly those of short height to attach and reach to the Handybar on the side of the door. In this case, they could be advised to move their seat backward to be closer to the door anchors. No consensus has been reached among reviewers regarding the value of the Handybar for the usage of breaking windows and cutting seat belt in the case of an emergency. One said that she would not recommend the Handybar for the emergency cutting of the seat belt and the breaking of windows while another mentioned that this feature was important for her clients. The Handybar requires good upper body strength of the right arm is used to exit the right side of the vehicle and of the left arm if exiting on the left side of the vehicle. The later aspect is not mentioned in the brochure and could enhance the instruction provided to customers.

Reviewers agreed to the fact that the product was easy and intuitive to use. The picture was found very useful and a suggestion was made to complete with a close up diagram to better demonstrate the direction to insert the Handybar in the car's U-shape anchor. Another comment was made to the effect that more instructions related to the storage could have been provided. The manufacturer could, for instances, add to its instruction the advice to store the Handybar in a place in the vehicle such as the middle section box or glove container that will ensure that the device does not become a projectile and hurt someone in the vehicle in case of a collision. Another safety aspect that was mentioned is the fact that if the Handybar is not properly secured, the person using it could fall. These aspects are not mentioned in the brochure and would be an important addition for the customers. All reviewers agreed that the Handybar appeared extremely robust which is a critical criteria in the context of this product intended purpose. Two of the reviewers knew where to get this product. Even though the brochure states that the Handybar has a universal "universal fit". The Handybar requires that the vehicle has a certain type of anchors in the door mechanism. There is a note to that effect at the bottom of the back cover of the product's package.

Table 1. Safety considerations

- The Handybar should be properly secured in the car's U-shape anchor before use
- Users should have sufficient upper body strength to efficiently use this product
- In a moving vehicle, the Handybar should be stored in a closed compartment to prevent it from being a projectile in case of a collision

Economic considerations (value for money, retail and customer service)

All reviewers stated that the value for money for this equipment was good. For the general population, it might not be easy to find out where to get a Handybar. This is not a product that is yet well-known. CAOT and its extensive network of occupational therapists throughout Canada could help disseminate the information about this product and may provide suggestions on where to get it. None of the reviewers knew if the after sale service was reliable. It would be important though to have the possibility to return the product if it doesn't fit with the anchoring system of the car or if it breaks after a normal usage.

Scientific evidence

A literature search was conducted but no scientific publications were found. This is potentially an opportunity for improvement and CAOT could offer expertise and collaboration to the manufacturer in that regard.

Other considerations

Manufacturer's description of the Handybar has been found brief but clear. One reviewer was not convinced about the relevance of this product description related to the emergency seat belt cutter and window breaker. This reviewer thought that a device that allows to cut the seat belt or to break a window in case of an emergency is not something you currently want or need to carry on in the car.

Review committee

The Handybar has been reviewed by 4 occupational therapists with diverse expertise and work experiences. The first reviewer is an occupational therapist with over 40 years of experience with assistive technology. She has worked in specialized clinics, the community, manufacturing and sales. She has presented across North America, published on the topic and served on government committees. The second reviewer had a considerable research background with a Ph.D. and postdoctoral studies. The third reviewer has established her private practice for many years and was able to review the product from the perspectives of a practitioner and a manager. The fourth reviewer has obtained her degree in occupation therapy within the last 12 months with a remarkable academic rank.

Customers' perspective

For this review, no member of the intended population was directly involved. When the Amazon website¹ was consulted as of July 28, 2014, a total of 760 customer reviews were published about the Handybar. Customer reviews were highly positive with 609 persons rating this product five stars out of five (see table below).

Table 2. Snapshot of part of the Amazon web page consulted¹



¹ <http://www.amazon.com/Avin-Handybar-Vehicle-Support-Handle/product-reviews/B000GUKKMW>

Table 3. Specific recommendations to the manufacturer

- Remove the mention in the brochure related to the universal fit as the vehicle requires the U-shape anchors.
- Mention that appropriate upper extremity strength is required to use the Handybar.
- Mention that the Handybar needs to be properly secured to the anchors before its use.
- Add a close up diagram to better demonstrate the direction to insert the Handybar in the car's U-shape anchor.
- Add instructions related to the storage of the Handybar in a moving vehicle.
- Consider supporting the conduct of a pilot study by occupational therapy students, supervised by CAOT, and for which the results related to the effectiveness of the Handybar will be published in different dissemination platforms.

Final recommendation

Reviewers were unanimous and would recommend that the Handybar be accepted for the CAOT product recognition program.