

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
Product Recognition Program

Report of the review of Stannah stairlift  
Siena, Starla, Scout and Sadler models



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Report last updated December 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 [Jim\_closs@stannah.com, Canadian Business Development & Dealer Support, (647) 529-4344]. 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 Stannah stairlift Siena, Starla, Scout and Sadler models. The stairlifts allow people with mobility impairments, major balance/equilibrium issues or low energy and limited endurance to access multiple levels and eliminate the need to climb stairs. The different safety, economic and environmental considerations are synthesized in this report. Reviewers were unanimous and would recommend that the Stannah stairlifts be accepted for the CAOT product recognition program.



**The Stannah Stairlifts are recognized by CAOT.**

## Review report

### The purpose of this product and target groups

The Stannah stairlifts is conceived for people with mobility impairments, balance/equilibrium issues or low energy and limited endurance. It provides a way to get up and down stairs in order to access multiple levels and eliminate the need to climb stairs without having to undertake the major renovations required to install an elevator. It could allow people to “age-in-place” and avoid the financial and personal implications related to moving.

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

The different Stannah stairlift models have an appealing modern design and a solid appearance. According to the product’s description, the Stannah stairlifts could accommodate clients weighing up to 350 pounds. Additionally, the slow and smooth movement of the Stannah stairlift makes it comfortable for the users. The chair and remote controls are fairly easy to understand. The chair swivels, making it easier to get on and off the seat safely. The Stannah stairlifts require enough floor space clearance at the top and bottom of the staircase to ensure transfer safety. Another safety feature to consider is the fact that the stairlift takes up a considerable width of the stair case. This can impact the walkability of the staircase for other people in the house. Among the different safety features in place with this product, there is a back-up battery that activates in case of power-outage so that users are not at risk of being stuck in the middle of a staircase. Moreover, the stairlift will stop if an item or a pet is on the stairs. A key is required to activate the system, which would prevent small children from playing with it. The company also offers a 24/7 support line for emergencies.

Even though it is adjustable to different home environments, it requires a trained installer. Some types of railing require regular maintenance. The company advertises that they offer complete services for the installation and maintenance.

#### Table 1. Safety considerations

Clients considering equipping their house with a stair lift should have the opportunity to try out the product at the closest store location.

Ensure the person using the stairlift has adequate:

- Capacity or help to transfer safely to the stairlift chair
- Trunk stability in the sitting position
- Cognitive capacity to operate the stairlift
- Space clearance both at the bottom and at the top of the stairs to complete transfers

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

The price includes both the product and the installation, and is priced according to the home environment; the more complicated the installation, the more costly it becomes. With simple straight stairs, the product retails at a base price of \$3,600.00 plus taxes. It would be advisable to explore the different funding venues and tax deduction programs that exist for a particular client in order to reduce the value of the investment. If the use of the lift prevents falls and the necessity to move, this might be worth the cost in terms of quality of life and off-setting hospital/ambulance fees, fall-related injuries/complications and/or moving to a different home.

## Scientific evidence

The possibility of using a stair lift is mentioned by authoritative organizations (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2015), in universal design textbooks (Preiser & Smith, 2011) and best practice guidelines (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2007). However, to our knowledge, only one case study has reported evidence related to the use of a stairlift (Sakellariou, 2015). In that study, a stairlift was the way a couple could resume an important aspect of their relationship: sharing a bed.

## Other considerations

Other considerations include the fact that it may be difficult to obtain permission to install a stairlift in a rental home. Clients may be concerned about the resale value of their home with this modification in place. The progressive nature or the prognosis of certain medical conditions needs to be considered in the decision-making process. According to the company, the Stannah stairlifts can also be installed outdoor; however, considering the rigor of Canadian winters, special dispositions such as coverage might need to be added.

**Table 2. Physical environment considerations**

Ensure:

- floor space clearance at the bottom and at the top of the staircase is adequate
- stairs are wide enough so they can be used by other members of the family despite the presence of the stairlift

## Review committee

The Stannah stairlift models have been reviewed by 3 occupational therapists with diverse expertise and work experiences. The first reviewer is an occupational therapist with over 13 years of experience working in the community, hospital and schools with clients of all ages. The second reviewer has gained clinical expertise in orthopedics and geriatrics before completing a Ph.D. and postdoctoral studies. The third reviewer has obtained her degree in occupation therapy within the last 12 months with fieldwork experience in home and community mobility interventions, including home adaptations.



## Final recommendation

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

## References

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