

Total Lab Solutions



Certification - Customer FAQ

What does the certification mark tell you ?

• A safety certification mark on a product simply tells you that the product meets the minimum electrical safety requirements for that kind of product. It is not intended to tell you anything about the product's quality, durability, or performance other than as they relate to safety.

Who can perform testing for certification ?

• U.S. safety certifications can only be performed by an OSHA-designated Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL), of which there are currently 16. However, each NRTL is only authorized to certify specific products. Four NRTLs are authorized to certify laboratory equipment: CSA, SGS, ITS ETL SEMKO (hereafter referred to as ETL), TUV, and UL.

What is a "Recognized" Laboratory ?

• In the US, testing laboratories are "recognized" by the Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) as Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTLs) that are qualified to test and certify that a product meets US standards, as governed by OSHA regulation 29 CFR 1910.7. All NRTLs test products against the same sets of standards, regardless of who wrote or published them.

What is the significance of OSHA recognition of an NRTL ?

• OSHA's recognition is not a government license or position, or a delegation or grant of government authority. Instead, the recognition is an acknowledgment that an organization has necessary qualifications to perform safety testing and certification of the specific products covered within its scope of recognition. As a result, OSHA can accept products "properly certified" by the NRTL. "Properly certified" generally means: 1) the product is labeled or marked with the registered certification mark of the NRTL, 2) the NRTL issues the certification for a product covered within the scope of a test standard for which OSHA has recognized it, and 3) the NRTL issues the certification from one of its sites (i.e., locations) that OSHA has recognized.

• There are a total of 16 labs that OSHA recognizes as approved NRTLs. Links are provided to each NRTL from OSHA's website allowing you to view the list of standards, sites, and programs that OSHA has recognized that NRTL to evaluate products too.

Why manufacturers have their machines certified ?

• Aside from the OSHA workplace requirement, liability is an ever-present concern. In the event of an injury, the manufacturer and distributor of the machine need to be able to demonstrate

that a safe product was sold. Likewise, a company purchasing the product needs to be able to show that it purchased a safe product for its workers to use. So, manufacturers also view certification as a sales tool.

How does US Product Testing & Certification work ?

- Testing and certification confirms that products meet US standards by bringing three independent groups together:
- Manufacturers: who make the products . Manufacturers use the applicable US standards in the design process.
- Standards Writing Organizations: who author US national product standards (ex: ANSI). These organizations include representatives from industry and other interested parties who define the specific standards for a particular type of product (e.g. a luminaire). In the US, responsibility for publishing, maintaining and distributing standards is often delegated to a standards writing organization such as ANSI, ASTM, UL, NSF, ASME, ASFE, NEC etc.
- Product Testing & Certification Laboratories: who test products to applicable standards and authorize product approval marks (ex: CSA). The laboratory is hired by the manufacturer to test and certify that their products meet the applicable standards.

What or Who is UL?

- Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) is an independent, not-for-profit product safety certification organization that has been writing Standards for Safety for over a century. Up until recently, UL was the only NRTL that could test products and verify compliance to the standards. This compliance has previously been referred to as having a product "UL Listed".
- UL is not a government agency, they are a private organization responsible for the generation and publication of safety standards. A separate division of UL is also an OSHA approved NRTL (Nationally Recognized Test Lab), which means they are authorized by OSHA to test, evaluate, and list products to safety standards.

What's the difference between the familiar UL Mark and other Listed Marks?

- All NRTL marks demonstrate that the product that bears it has met the minimum requirements of widely accepted product safety standards as determined through the independent testing of a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL). And, as part of that testing regimen, the product manufacturer has agreed to periodic follow-up inspections to verify continued compliance. So, the only real difference between the marks is in the service, and services of the testing laboratory behind them.

What's the difference between "certified," "Listed," or "approved?"

• For our purposes, nothing. These terms are all used to refer to safety certification. UL and ETL use the term "Listed," while CSA and TUV prefer "certified."

Should accept CE Marking on products as suitable for installation in North America?

No. Unfortunately, inspectors are being told differently in the field. Many are being told that CE Marking is equivalent to UL (or similar marks of conformity) and that they must accept that CE Marking on the product installed in North America. This has led to significant and varied discussions on the issue. The bottom line is that CE Marking means nothing for products installed in North America and statements to the contrary only add confusion. The inspector needs some method of assurance that the product meets the appropriate North American standards.

Certification Definitions:

29 CFR 1910.7 - Section 1910.7 of Title 29, Code Of Federal Regulations (CFR) – The regulatory authority that defines the requirements for a nationally recognized testing laboratory (NRTL), and the criteria and requirements to evaluate and recognize an NRTL.

ACCREDITATION – A formal acknowledgment that a testing organization is competent to carry out a specific test or specific types of tests.

APPROVED – Acceptable to the Assistant Secretary. See the definition of "acceptable" in 29 CFR 1910.399. Products certified by an NRTL are acceptable to the Assistant Secretary, and therefore are approved for purposes of meeting the requirements in the specific paragraphs of 29 CFR Part 1910.

CERTIFICATION – The procedure by which written assurance is given that a supplier provides a product, process, or service which conforms to a standard or specification. Within the context of the NRTL Program, the NRTL provides such assurance showing that it has determined a product conforms to one or more specific consensus-based U.S. safety standard(s). The certification must be evidenced by the NRTL's certification mark on the product.

CERTIFICATION BODY – Within the context of the NRTL Program, the part of the NRTL's organization that conducts the product certification, as opposed to testing laboratory, activities, i.e., listing and labeling and inspection of manufacturer's facilities.

CERTIFICATION MARK – Protected mark, applied or issued under the rules of a certification, indicating that adequate

confidence is provided that the relevant product, process, or service is in compliance with a specific standard or other normative document.

CERTIFY – Tangible assurance by a recognized third party that a product is in conformity with the safety requirements in specified test standards. Within the context of the NRTL Program, the recognized third party is the NRTL and the term "certified" includes but is not limited to the following expressions and any combination of them found in any OSHA rule, regulation, or standard: "listed"; "accepted"; "approved"; "meet the requirements of"; "tested and approved"; "tested and listed"; "certified"; and "otherwise determined to be safe."

LISTED – Equipment is "listed" if it is of a kind mentioned in a list that is published by a nationally recognized testing laboratory (NRTL), which makes periodic inspection of the production of such equipment, and/or such equipment meets nationally recognized standards or has been tested and found safe for use in a specified manner.

LABELED – Equipment is "labeled" if there is an attached label, symbol, or other identifying mark of a NRTL which makes periodic inspections of the production of such equipment, and whose labeling indicates compliance with nationally recognized standards or tests to determine safe use in a specified manner.

NRTL – (Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory) The legal entity recognized by OSHA as meeting the requirements defined in 29 CFR 1910.7.

RECOGNITION (AS AN NRTL) – The acknowledgment by OSHA that an organization meets the requirements for an NRTL specified in 29 CFR 1910.7(b). In granting recognition, OSHA has determined that the organization has the capability, control programs, independence, and effective procedures to perform safety testing and certification of the types of products covered under the test standards included in its scope of recognition.

STANDARD – Document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeat use, rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context. Within the context of calibrations, an artifact, instrument, or other reference material that provides a basis for setting a parameter of a test instrument to a specific value.

TESTING LABORATORY – Laboratory or portion of an organization that measures, examines, tests, calibrates, or otherwise determines the characteristics or performance of materials or products.

TEST PROCEDURE – A sufficiently detailed instruction to follow in examining and testing a type of product, or in performing a specific type of test. For purposes of the NRTL Program, a test procedure must be consistent with and, where necessary, elaborate upon the product safety test standard(s) applicable to the products under test. A test standard may be used, partly or completely, as a test procedure if it contains sufficiently detailed instructions that will yield repeatable results. See Policy on Testing Procedures in Appendix C.

THIRD PARTY – Person or body that is recognized to be independent of the parties involved, as concerns the issue(s) in question.

THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION – A form of certification in which the supplier's claim of conformity is validated by a technically and otherwise competent body other than one controlled by a producer or buyer. Within the context of the NRTL Program, the "third party" is the NRTL and the "supplier" is generally a product manufacturer.



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