Q&A

Q What does a ‘mark’ on the bottom of a product signify?
A A safety certification "mark" (such as an ETL, S, or GS mark) on a product means it has been tested to the product safety standards that apply to that product for it to be sold or distributed in a certain region. The mark is not an endorsement of the product, nor does it guarantee its safety or performance. It shows proof of compliance to the applicable standard for that product.

Other marks such as Intertek’s Quality and Performance marks on a product or packaging show that the product has undergone a process of independent safety, quality or performance testing by Intertek, which testing may go above and beyond applicable standards and applies international best practices.

Q If a product has a ‘mark’ on the bottom of it, does it mean that it is safe?
A A certification mark is proof of compliance to a standard. No mark is a guarantee of product safety. This is because safety issues can arise from the way that a product is used by a person even if the product complies with the standard. Safety issues can also arise with products that meet a standard, but something occurred with the product that the standard did not address.

Q Who can apply marks to products?
A Only Intertek and properly accredited certification bodies or authorized applicants are eligible to "mark" products with their proprietary certifications.

Some marks, however, such as the CE Mark in the EU, may be self-declared by the manufacturer and do not necessarily mean that they have been tested or applied by a 3rd party laboratory or certifier.

See attached chart of Intertek marks and marks that Intertek is accredited to provide (ie certification marks that show adherence to a regulatory standard in a certain region).

Q What is the difference between an ‘Intertek’ mark and a mark that Intertek is accredited to apply, for example the CCC mark for China?
A Intertek owns a family of proprietary certification marks, including the ETL and WH marks in North America, and the S, ASTA and BEAB marks in Europe; all of which are evidence of compliance to relevant product safety standards. Only Intertek can offer those specific marks. Other national marks such as the CCC mark in China are government sponsored and only can be issued by certification bodies with the proper accreditations and approval by the respective government.

Q Which marks apply to which countries and which products?
A See attached chart of Intertek marks and marks that Intertek is accredited to provide.

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Q How and when (along the supply chain) do manufacturers of products have marks applied to their products.
A Marks are normally applied to the product after manufacturing and all quality assurance and production line testing is successfully completed. Marks may be applied as long as the product remains in compliance with the Listing Report verified during routine follow up (or surveillance) activities.

Q If a product has a US product safety mark does this mean I can use it in say India or France?
A If a product has a US product safety mark, then it is an indication the product has been tested and evaluated to the standards adopted in the US. If there is no indication that the product has been tested to the standard(s) of India or France, it cannot be assumed the product is safe to use in another country, due to different standards, electrical requirements, product requirements and cord/plug assemblies for example.

Other non-certification marks, such as Intertek’s own quality, safety and performance marks, indicate that products have undergone a comprehensive quality, safety or performance related-testing program. These programs and marks frequently will apply testing standards that may apply some of the most stringent international standards, and can be helpful for a manufacturer to adopt testing programs that increase the ‘sale-ability’ of their products in international markets.

Q What sort of marks should I look out for if I want to know that a product complies with safety laws or that it is of good quality?
A The certification marks of ETL, CSA, UL in North America, for example, signify that a product has been tested to, and found to comply with, national product safety standards. The presence of a product certification mark also means the product is listed in a public directory maintained by the certifier that verified the product’s compliance. In addition, certification marks such as the ETL, CSA, or UL marks are evidence that the product is subject to an on-going follow-up program that aims to ensure the product’s continued compliance over time.

Intertek’s own quality, safety and performance marks are used more and more by manufacturers to demonstrate that their products have undergone a comprehensive quality, safety or performance related-testing program.

Q Are manufacturers using marks more or less today why?
A Manufacturers are using more marks today as more regulatory requirements are introduced, not only in established markets but in emerging markets around the world. This is driven by both mandatory country marking requirements and also market demands to differentiate a product from its competition, and increasing consumer demands for goods of higher quality and safety.

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Q  Are consumers in some countries more ‘mark-conscious’ when they shop for products than others? Why?
A  Consumers in some countries (Sweden and Germany, for example) that have had well-established national product safety mark systems for many years are more ‘mark-conscious’ than in other countries and their buying decisions are influenced by the presence of recognized safety certifications.

Generally in many countries consumers assume that the products they purchase meet all of the minimum applicable safety requirements. It has been documented that consumers generally base their purchasing decision on price, brand recognition and a third attribute such as warranty, color or special feature. Where a brand has been called into question on its safety or quality publicly, consumers will look for reassurance that the company has addressed this issue.
Intertek’s Certification Marks

Certification marks are evidence that a product has been tested and demonstrates compliance to applicable standards. Certification marks are often required before product can be sold in a particular country or region, such as the US, Canada, EU. What’s more, certification marks are evidence that the product is subject to a program of ongoing factory inspections to demonstrate compliance over time. For more than 100 years, Intertek has guided its clients through challenging certification processes, making it faster, simpler and more efficient. Below are a few examples of Intertek’s proprietary certification marks which demonstrate compliance to various regulatory safety and performance requirements in countries around the globe.

ETL Mark
The ETL Listed Mark is evidence of compliance to various North American Safety Standards for electrical, gas, fire, and mechanical requirements. Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ’s) in 50 states and Canada, and retailers accept the ETL Listed Mark as evidence of product compliance with their product safety standards.

WH Mark
Intertek’s Warnock Hersey Mark (WH) is North America’s leading product safety and performance mark for building and construction products. The WH Mark is evidence of compliance to relevant building codes, association criteria, and product safety and performance standards. Nearly 80% of North America’s wood fire-rated doors bear the WH Mark. It can also be found on more than 6,500 products ranging from builders’ hardware to hearth, plumbing and construction products.

S Mark
The S Mark is a Scandinavian safety mark that is exclusively provided by Intertek for products demonstrating compliance with electrical safety requirements. Products bearing the S Mark (a voluntary certification), in conjunction with the required CE marking for Europe, demonstrate that Intertek has independently tested and certified that products are in compliance with product safety requirements.
ASTA Diamond Mark
Intertek’s ASTA Diamond Mark is a symbol of safety for products that conduct and manage electricity, such as switchgear and plugs. The ASTA Diamond Mark shows a product complies with National, European or International standards and satisfies the requirement of the General Product Safety Directive.

BEAB Approved Mark
The BEAB Approved Mark from Intertek is a European Safety Mark, used by leading electrical manufacturers to support CE Marking and to demonstrate conformity with the Low Voltage Directive (LVD). A BEAB Approved Mark on products demonstrates that Intertek has verified it conforms to applicable safety requirements across the UK and Europe.

GS Mark
The GS Mark indicates a product was tested and complies with the minimum requirements of the German Equipment and Product Safety Act (GPSG). The GS Mark, which stands for “Geprüfte Sicherheit” and means safety tested in German, is a licensed mark of the German government and only issued by an accredited, third-party product safety testing and certification agency. The GS Mark is recognized throughout Germany and Europe as evidence a product conforms to applicable safety requirements for the GPSG.

Quality & Performance Mark (QPM)
Intertek’s proprietary Quality & Performance Mark (QPM) was created to give manufacturers a point of differentiation in the marketplace and consumers a clear, objective measure of a product’s reliability. The QPM Mark is third party, validated evidence that a product meets or exceeds manufacturer’s substantiated claims, such as durability, functionality, life cycle and workmanship.
National Certification Marks

Intertek provides National Certifications and Market Access to More Than 120 Countries.

A National Certification mark is a mark that is owned and authorized by a government or government sponsored organization in a particular region. Intertek is accredited by these national organizations to provide third-party testing to manufactures for compliance to specific regional requirements. For more than 100 years, Intertek has guided its clients through the challenging certification process, making it faster, simpler and more efficient. Below is a representation of some of the national certifications Intertek is accredited to provide clients access to.

CB Scheme
The CB Scheme, created by the International Electrotechnical Commission for Electrical Equipment (IECEE), is an international program for the exchange and acceptance of product safety test results among participating laboratories and certification organizations around the world. It is intended to reduce obstacles to international trade which arise from having to meet different national certification or approval criteria. The CB Scheme offers manufacturers a simplified way of obtaining multiple national safety certifications for their products — providing entry into over 45 countries. Intertek participates in the CB Scheme by providing four National Certification Bodies (NCB) for the CB Scheme process and numerous CB Testing Laboratories (CBTL) globally.

The CE Mark
The CE Mark is a self declaration by a manufacturer/importer asserting products meet applicable safety requirements for European Directives; however it is a mandatory European conformity mark, requiring third-party verification, for certain product types, such as toys, machinery, low-voltage equipment and medical devices that indicates compliance with the requirements in the European Directives. Intertek has four European Union-based Notified Bodies located in Germany, Sweden, and two in the United Kingdom that help manufacturers navigate the CE Marking process.

China Compulsory Certification Mark (CCC)
The CCC Mark is a labeling requirement for 132 different product categories entering China, and verifies to customs officials that products comply with safety and quality requirements set forth by the Chinese government. Intertek provides access to the CCC Mark with local resources within China, including 3 labs and 211 trained engineers with thorough knowledge of the CCC marking system.

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The European Norms Electrical Certification (ENEC)
The ENEC Mark is a European Mark used on electrical products that demonstrate compliance with European safety standards. Once used as a certification mark for luminaries and lighting components, the ENEC Mark is now found on a wide variety of products including security transformers, power supply units, IT equipment, switching devices, capacitors and filters. Intertek guides customers through all steps of the European Union’s voluntary ENEC Marking Scheme process.

The Norma Oficial Mexicana (NOM-ETL)
The NOM Mark is a mandatory Mexican mark for electrical products, gas appliances, wires and cables, electronic and telecommunications products exported into Mexico. To obtain a test report, manufacturers must evaluate their products in a Mexican accredited third-party laboratory, using NOM requirements. Intertek’s laboratory in Mexico City is an accredited EMA laboratory; however, testing for NOM requirements can be completed in other Intertek labs in North America, Europe and Asia.

For more information on specific testing and certification information, please contact Intertek at 1-800-WORLDLAB, email icenter@intertek.com, or visit our website at www.intertek.com.

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