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Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity

Évaluation de la conformité — Exigences générales pour les marques de conformité par tierce partie

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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives or www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents) or the IEC list of patent declarations received (see patents.iec.ch).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html. In the IEC, see www.iec.ch/understanding-standards.

This document was prepared by the ISO Committee on Conformity Assessment (CASCO).

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC 17030:2003), ISO/IEC Guide 23:1982 and ISO Guide 27:1983, which have been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— inclusion of Annex A as guidance for the use of third-party marks of conformity issued based on a defined object of conformity assessment through conformity assessment standards;

— clarification of the requirement of surveillance;

— clarification of logo/symbol/mark;

— restructuring;

— alignment of language with the CASCO toolbox;

— the content related to examples of possible misuse of third-party marks of conformity is considered in a brochure available on www.iso.org.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

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Introduction

The prime purpose of this document is to enable a uniform approach to the use of third-party marks of conformity, to fill relevant gaps in existing International Standards and Guides developed by ISO and IEC, to address potential problems arising from different uses of third-party marks of conformity, to provide a clear and rational basis for their use, and to set out general requirements. This document concentrates on third-party marks of conformity but can also be used as guidance for applications of marks of conformity not covered by this document.

Marks of conformity have different uses and can take different forms in various media, such as employing quick response (QR) codes, public ledger technology, distributed ledger technology (e.g. blockchain) or other electronic means. They are found on products, certificates and publications denoting the conformity to specified requirements of a product, management system, service, process, person or an organization. Marks of conformity used on a product convey to the user that the product fulfils the requirements for characteristics such as its safety, quality, origin, performance, reliability or impact on the environment. The principle purpose of all marks of conformity is to gain the confidence of the market, including consumers, in products and other objects of conformity assessment to which these marks have been applied. The aim of this document is to lead to improved market confidence, international recognition and consumer acceptance of third-party marks of conformity.

In order to achieve this, the following questions should be considered and addressed.

— What is the object of conformity assessment?

— Which conformity assessment body is providing the third-party mark of conformity?

— Who requires the third-party conformity assessment activity?

— Why is this third-party mark of conformity required?

— How is the information of conformity best transmitted to the interested parties, e.g. customers, users, government authorities?

In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

— “shall” indicates a requirement;

— “should” indicates a recommendation;

— “may” indicates a permission;

— “can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

Further details can be found in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

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Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity

1 Scope

This document provides general requirements for third-party marks of conformity, including their issue and use.

This document is applicable to third-party marks of conformity issued and used in different forms and various media, including digital representation employing electronically stored and displayed marks, machine readable code, blockchain (distributed ledger) or other electronic means.

NOTE 1 This document can also be used as guidance in using marks of conformity in activities other than third-party conformity assessment.

NOTE 2 Third-party marks of conformity in accordance with this document also include symbols of recognition, such as accreditation symbols. For consistency of terminology, they are referred to as accreditation marks.

NOTE 3 Third-party marks of conformity in accordance with this document can include logos (e.g. the sign of a conformity assessment body or trademarks), symbols (e.g. the representation of recognition in an accreditation agreement or the depiction of the applicable programme) or a combination thereof.

NOTE 4 Third-party marks of conformity as a graphic representation of demonstrated conformity in accordance with this document can be a combination of multiple marks (e.g. indications of compliance with several sets of specifications, codes for individually fulfilled specifications).

NOTE 5 This document does not apply to markings that provide indication of a designation, a code, or a classification only. Furthermore, it does not apply to graphic representations (e.g. of conformity assessment systems or schemes/programmes) or logos (e.g. of an association of accreditation bodies or an association of conformity assessment bodies).

NOTE 6 Third-party marks of conformity are based on a conformity assessment scheme that includes the function of surveillance.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

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3.1
third-party mark of conformity
protected mark issued by a body performing third-party conformity assessment, indicating that an object of conformity assessment fulfils the applicable specified requirements

Note 1 to entry: A protected mark is a mark legally protected against unauthorized use.

Note 2 to entry: Specified requirements can be stated in normative documents such as regulations, standards and technical specifications. Specified requirements can be detailed or general.

3.2
owner of a third-party mark of conformity
person or organization that has legal rights to a *third-party mark of conformity* (3.1)

3.3
issuer of a third-party mark of conformity
body that grants the right to use a *third-party mark of conformity* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: The issuer is not always the *owner of a third-party mark of conformity* (3.2) and can be authorized to sub-licence other bodies.

4 General requirements

4.1 The owner of a third-party mark of conformity shall be responsible for protecting the mark legally against unauthorized use.

4.2 The owner of a third-party mark of conformity or issuer of a third-party mark of conformity shall:

a) have and communicate rules governing the use of the third-party mark of conformity;

b) take measures to minimize misunderstandings and lack of clarity regarding the third-party mark of conformity that can lead to a reduction in its effectiveness;

c) have rules to ensure that the third-party mark of conformity and any accompanying information are not misleading and take action against their use in a misleading way;

d) have measures to protect and monitor the use of the third-party mark of conformity;

e) take actions to resolve misuse of the third-party mark of conformity, including withdrawal of the mark or appropriate legal action;

f) take action on and keep a record of all complaints relating to the use of the third-party mark of conformity.

4.3 When the owner of a third-party mark of conformity or issuer of a third-party mark of conformity grants a licence for the use of that mark by others, a legally enforceable agreement shall be made in accordance with the rules referred to in 4.2 a).

5 Third-party marks of conformity and their use

5.1 A third-party mark of conformity shall be designed and developed to minimize the risk, as appropriate, of counterfeiting or other forms of misuse.

NOTE Appropriate design and development can include employing QR codes, public ledger and distributed ledger technology (e.g. blockchain) or other electronic means.

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