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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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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. In the field of conformity assessment, the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO) is responsible for the development of International Standards and Guides.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft International Standards are circulated to the national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

ISO/IEC 17030 was prepared by the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO).

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC 17030:2003), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- [Annex A](#) (informative) has been included as guidance for the use of third-party marks of conformity issued based on a defined object of conformity through conformity assessment standards;
- clarification of the requirement of surveillance;
- clarification of logo/symbol/mark;
- restructuring;
- alignment of language with the CASCO toolbox.

ISO/IEC Guide 23:1982 and ISO Guide 27:1983 have been taken into account during the revision of this standard and these guides have been withdrawn following the publication of this standard.

The content related to examples of possible misuse of third-party marks of conformity have been considered in a brochure available on iso.org.

It was circulated for voting to the national bodies of both ISO and IEC, and was approved by both organizations.

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 ISO, IEC, ISO/IEC Standards and Guides, 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 may also be used as guidance for other applications of marks of conformity.

Marks of conformity have different uses and can take different forms in various media such as employing QR codes, public 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 product convey to the user that the product fulfils the requirements for characteristics such as its safety, quality, performance, reliability or impact on the environment. Most important for 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 use of this document should 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?

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 covers 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 other than third-party conformity assessment activity.

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

NOTE 3 Third-party marks of conformity according to 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 according to 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, which 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), logos (e.g. association of accreditation bodies and association of conformity assessment bodies).

NOTE 6 third party mark of conformity are based on a conformity assessment scheme that include 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 terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

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

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

Note 1 to entry: The issuer may not be the owner of the third-party mark of conformity, and may 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 and/or issuer of the third-party mark of conformity shall:

- a) have rules governing the use of the third-party mark of conformity, including communicating on these rules;
- b) take measures to minimize misunderstandings and lack of clarity regarding the third-party mark of conformity that could 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; and
- 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 or issuer of the third-party mark of conformity grants a licence for the use of that mark by others, a legally enforceable agreement shall be made according to 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 technology (e.g. blockchain), Information Communication Technology (ICT) or other electronic means.

5.2 Third-party marks of conformity, including accompanying information or publicly available information, shall identify the issuer and the aspects covered by the mark (e.g. quality, safety, environmental, performance, ethics) in a way that avoids any potential misunderstanding.

5.3 A third-party mark of conformity may be accompanied by additional information to make the meaning of the mark more clearly understood. Such information shall not be misleading for the relevant interested parties.

5.4 A third-party mark of conformity shall be traceable to the specified requirements to which the object of conformity assessment conforms.

5.5 A third-party mark of conformity shall be used only where it relates to all the specified requirements.

5.6 Only a third-party mark of conformity issued in accordance with a product conformity assessment scheme may be displayed on the product or product packaging. All other third-party marks of conformity, such as those relating to management systems and services, shall not be displayed on a product, product packaging, or in a way that may be interpreted as denoting product conformity.

5.7 When a third-party mark of conformity relates to a tangible product, the mark shall be directly applied to each product, except where the physical size of the product does not permit this or when the application is not appropriate for the type of product, in which case it may be applied on the package or other accompanying information. If a third-party mark of conformity only relates to certain parts of a product, the rules governing its use shall include requirements to minimize any misunderstanding that the mark applies to the entire product.

5.8 A reference to third-party marks of conformity may also be used on other media such as letter heads, business cards, company vehicles, promotional materials, Internet websites, social media.

NOTE [Annex A](#) provides guidance for the use of third-party marks of conformity issued for an object of conformity assessment.

6 Issuing third-party marks of conformity

6.1 Issuing third-party marks of conformity shall be based on a conformity assessment scheme that contains at least the elements of the functional approach according to ISO/IEC 17000 and the following elements:

- surveillance, systematic iteration of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of the statement of conformity in order to assure continued confidence in the third-party mark of conformity unless covered by [6.2](#).

6.2 In conformity assessment schemes for products for which the issuer evaluates each product (100% sampling) produced prior to the application of the third-party mark of conformity, licensing and surveillance are not required.

6.3 The third-party mark of conformity shall only be applied under the rules laid down in a publicly available conformity assessment scheme.

6.4 An appropriate maximum period of time for applying a third-party mark of conformity after the specified standard or other normative document is revised or becomes obsolete shall be established by the rules of the conformity assessment scheme.

7 Ownership and control

7.1 Information

7.1.1 The owner or issuer shall provide, upon request, information that explains the meaning of the third-party mark of conformity. Specific responses to questions or concerns from interested parties regarding the third-party mark of conformity shall be provided.

7.1.2 The issuer shall maintain and update a list of objects of conformity assessment which have been granted the third-party mark of conformity.

7.1.3 The owner or issuer of the third-party mark of conformity shall maintain, update and make available on request, a description of the rights and obligations of licensees, and other restrictions or limitations on the use of the mark.

7.2 Licence

7.2.1 The agreement specified in [4.3](#) shall contain provisions to assure that the licensee follows the rules of the scheme.

7.2.2 The licensee shall be required to:

- a) control the use of the third-party mark of conformity;
- b) take corrective actions in case of non-conformity or misuse; and
- c) keep a record of all complaints relating to the use of the third-party mark of conformity and make these available to the owner/issuer.

7.3 Monitoring the use of third-party marks of conformity

7.3.1 The owner or issuer shall establish a procedure to deal with any alleged incorrect or misleading uses of the third-party mark of conformity and shall take suitable actions. This includes actions to be taken in case the misuser refuses to act upon the misuse.

NOTE Suitable actions can include periodical surveillance of licensees, corrective action, withdrawal of licence, publication of the transgression and, if necessary, other legal action. This also applies in situations of misuse by a party not under contract with the owner or the issuer of the third-party mark of conformity.

7.3.2 Corrective actions shall be taken in respect of misuse of the third-party mark of conformity. Corrective actions shall include steps to cooperate with relevant interested parties as appropriate, depending on the extent to which their involvement will minimize the negative consequence of the misuse.

Annex A

(informative)

Use of third-party marks of conformity

This Annex provides guidance for the use of third-party marks of conformity issued for an object of conformity assessment, as the result of a conformity assessment carried out according to ISO/IEC 17065 for products, processes, services, ISO/IEC 17021-1 for management systems, ISO/IEC 17024 for persons certification and ISO/IEC 17011 for conformity assessment bodies. The content of the clauses of this Annex incorporate some of the relevant parts of ISO/IEC Guide 23.

A.1 Who requires information on conformity with standards?

The following contains examples of who, and in what situations, information on conformity can be required.

The responsible manufacturer may require that it be known that his product is in conformity with the relevant specified requirements.

The purchaser may need to know that the product he has purchased meets the requirements which have been specified.

Purchasers and other interested parties may want to know that an organization fulfils requirements of a management system standard.

Inspection bodies, insurance companies, etc. in order to have confidence in the product for which they are taking a risk, may need to have information on conformity of the concerned product or service or their management system to the relevant requirements.

Regulatory bodies, such as governments, etc. may need evidence that products covered by legislation meet the required specified requirements.

A.2 Types of mark of conformity

A.2.1 Recommended marks of conformity

Whilst it may be desirable to have differing marks of conformity to distinguish a mark of conformity for products complying with a product standard from a mark of conformity indicating that a product complies with a standard dealing only with specific properties, it will not be easily understood by the consumer and could lead to misinterpretation. Differentiation would require a legend below each mark.

At the international level, where the relevant marks of conformity are intended to be internationally acceptable, the problem is further complicated by the issue of languages. Whilst the international languages of ISO and IEC are English, French and Russian, the recipients of the products are not necessarily sufficiently versed in these languages to read and interpret the text within the mark.

In cases where the specified requirements contain different grades or types, descriptive words should appear in close proximity to the mark of conformity to indicate which grade or type is being certified. Preferable for this indication are symbols, which are universally understandable.

If the grade or value has not been stipulated in the standard, but left open for any grade or value to be stated by the manufacturer, then such grades or values should appear in close proximity to the mark, indicating the property or characteristic and its stated grade or value.

A.2.2 Further considerations

If, after all the factors have been considered, essential reasons still make it desirable to apply a mark of conformity to a product complying with a standard which only covers specific properties of the product, it is suggested that the mark of conformity together with the reference to the standard as well as a short indication of the aspects covered by the standard, may be applied to the product. It is preferable to use symbols which are universally understandable rather than descriptive words.

However, it is recommended that consideration should rather be given in such circumstances to the use of certificates of conformity which would be more precise in their information.

A.3 Elements for third-party marks of conformity

Elements that a third-party conformity mark may contain but are not limited to:

- Identification of what is being certified, for example: Management systems, process, product or services;
- The name or acronym of the certification body;
- The standard or normative document under which the product, process, service, person or management system has been certified;
- Unique identification, which is traceable to the statement of conformity.

Bibliography

- [1] ISO/IEC 17011, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*
- [2] ISO/IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 1: Requirements*
- [3] ISO/IEC 17065, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*
- [4] ISO/IEC 17020, *Conformity assessment — Requirements for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspection*
- [5] ISO/IEC 17024, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons*
- [6] ISO/IEC 22603-1, *Information technology — Digital representation of product information — Part 1: General requirements*