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Low Voltage Directive: CE Certification Procedure

THE CE-CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Before the CE Marking may be affixed, the compliance of the product with the applicable requirements must be certified.

The CE-certification procedure of the Low Voltage Directive consists of certain steps that will be presented here.

Please be informed that CEMarking.net can provide advice and assistance in all stages of the certification process.

STEP 1: DETERMINE WHICH CE DIRECTIVES APPLY TO THE PRODUCT

The first step in the certification process is to determine which (other) European CE Directives apply to the product. It is possible that one product falls under the scope of more than one CE Directive.

STEP 2: READ THE TEXTS OF THE APPLICABLE DIRECTIVE(S)

Read the text of the Low Voltage Directive and possible other applicable CE Directives. The essential requirements for the product can be found in the text.

STEP 3: APPLYING THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OR HARMONIZED STANDARDS

The essential requirements that apply to the product are set out in the Directive. They define the results to be attained, or the risks to be dealt with, but do not specify the manufacturing specifications or technical solutions for reaching that result.

The manufacturer is free to choose a technical solution as long as the final product meets the result as defined in the essential requirement.

Technical solutions for meeting the essential requirements can be found in European harmonized standards (EN-standards). However, please note that the application of EN-standards is not mandatory.

The great advantage of using publicized EN-standards is that it leads to a 'presumption of conformity' with the essential requirements of the applicable European Directives.

The European harmonized standards are adopted by European standards organizations (CEN, CENELEC or ETSI) upon a mandate issued by the European Commission.

STEP 4: CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

The fourth steps in the CE certification procedure relate to the actual assessment of the conformity of the product with the essential requirements. In order to prove the conformity of the product with the essential requirements of the Directive and harmonized standards, examinations and compliance tests are necessary. The results of the tests must be documented.

STEP 5: COMPILING OF A TECHNICAL FILE

The Low Voltage Directive makes obligatory the compilation of a Technical File containing information to demonstrate the conformity of the product to the applicable requirements. The Technical File must be kept available for the national market surveillance authorities for at least ten years from the last date of manufacture of the product. The content of the Technical File depends upon the nature of the product.

STEP 6: INSTRUCTION

The goal of the European CE Directives is to minimize the health and safety risks of the product for the user. For this reason the Low Voltage Directive obliges to provide an instruction about the safe installation, use, maintenance and reparation of the product.

Because it is essential that the user is able to understand the (safety) instructions, it is obligatory to provide a translation of the manual in the official language(s) of the country where the product is being placed on the market.

STEP 7: EC DECLARATION OF CONFORMITY

The Low Voltage Directive imposes an obligation for the manufacturer, his authorized representative established within the Community or the importer, to draw up an 'EC Declaration of Conformity' when the product is placed on the market. This is more or less a legal statement ensuring that the product satisfies the essential requirements of the applicable directives.

The EC Declaration of Conformity must be kept for at least ten years from the last date of manufacture of the product, and must be made available to the surveillance authority immediately upon request.

STEP 8: THE AFFIXING OF THE CE MARKING

The CE certification process is concluded with the affixing of the CE Marking to the product.

The CE Marking indicates that the product conforms with the relevant essential requirements, and other applicable provisions, and that the product has been subject to the appropriate conformity assessment procedure(s). Hence, Member States are not allowed to restrict the placing on the market and putting into service of CE marked products, unless such measures can be justified on the basis of evidence of the non-compliance of the product.

The CE Marking consists of the initials 'CE'.

If the CE Marking is reduced or enlarged the proportions must be respected.

The logo must have a height of at least 5-mm.

The CE Marking must be affixed visibly, legibly and indelibly.

The CE Marking must be affixed to the product or to its data plate. However, where this is not possible or not warranted on account of the nature of the product, it must be affixed to the packaging, if any, and to the accompanying documents, where the directive concerned provides for such documents.

The affixing of markings on the product which are likely to deceive third parties as to the meaning and form of the CE Marking is not allowed. Any other marking may only be affixed to the product, the packaging or a label provided that the visibility and legibility of the CE Marking is not thereby reduced.

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