

# Underwriters Laboratories Inc.

## Trends in Conformity Assessment

Erin Grossi  
Manager, International Affairs  
UL Government Affairs  
Washington, DC



# Overview of UL



Independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to public safety.

Global reach with subsidiaries in 26 countries, including Brazil.

Leader in standards development, product safety testing and certification, including quality systems registrations.

UL has more than 800 published standards covering more than 14,000 product categories.

1 billion UL Marks appeared on products in 2006.

# Privatizing CA Activities



In the US, moves to accredit private sector conformity assessment bodies for regulatory purposes:

- FDA Accredited Persons Program  
510(k) pre-market clearance
- FCC Telecommunications Certification Bodies

• In some sectors, private sector certification preceded gov. regulation and is still effective (e.g. fire protection equipment, electrical safety).

# Third-Party CA Versus SDoC



Continued perception that OSHA NRTL program (Third-Party CA) is effective.

*- Calls for Suppliers Declaration of Conformity (SDoC) in high-tech sector -*

Failure rate of products on first pass through certification programs average 50%. This causes re-design and alterations to reach compliance.

# Production of New Technologies



## CA for new technologies:

- Nanotechnology
- Biofuels
- High-Tech (e.g.chem/nuclear/bio detection devices)
- Generators

## Involves challenges:

- Health/Safety Issues
- Inconclusive Research
- Balance Speed to Market with Safety
- Liability Concerns for SDOs and Conformity Assessment Bodies



# Factoring in Consumer Behavior



**Conformity Assessment Bodies are challenged to factor consumer behavior into safety requirements.**



# Evolution of Safety



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# International Concerns



Supply chains for products are global. What does this mean for manufacturers?

- Manufacturers have to maintain product safety/quality as components move around the world
- Manufacturers must be aware of chemicals or other sources of contamination introduced in product during production.
- Manufacturers may need certification services in new locations around the world to follow production.
- Manufacturers want to minimize effort/cost associated with product certification for international markets.



# International Concerns



Supply chains for products are global. What does this mean for certification bodies?

- Certification bodies must provide quality management system registrations for increased sectors and combine certifications with quality audits.
- Certification bodies must meet the needs of manufacturers for risk assessments throughout the supply chain.
- Certification bodies must constantly analyze production logistics globally and shift resources in order to meet needs.
- Certification bodies must seek national treatment abroad to provide customers one-stop shopping.

# International Concerns

Supply chains for products are global. What does this mean for regulators?

- Regulators must seek alignments to harmonize product requirements globally and accept conformity assessment results from foreign bodies.
- Regulators must strive to achieve a global culture of safety.



# Counterfeiting Certification Marks

Counterfeit certification marks pose serious threats to health and safety.

WTO takes a zero-tolerance approach to counterfeiting.

Developing countries are often dumping grounds for unsafe, shoddy products.

Need for increased market surveillance and education at all levels.



# Thank You!



For more information, contact

Erin W. Grossi

Manager, International Affairs

[Erin.Waldron-Grossi@us.ul.com](mailto:Erin.Waldron-Grossi@us.ul.com)

202-296-7841