

# Technical Briefing Note

Subject	Date Issued	Revision
Understanding Testing & Certification	6th Nov 2017	1

## OVERVIEW

There appears to be some confusion in the market place in defining what constitutes a “compliant product”. The first question is, - compliant with what? Generally, “compliance” relates to meeting a clearly defined standard or definition of performance. However, compliance means different things to different people.

This Technical Briefing Note attempts to clarify the issue.

In helping to explain what “compliance” really means, let us relate this discussion to a fictitious Standard for the performance requirements of a “widget”.

The Standard will state the performance requirements of the widget including requiring it to pass tests as defined in the test appendices of the Standard - and those tests could include separate tests for the individual components of the widget. The Standard will also specify the test equipment required and the detailed calibration and performance requirements for the test equipment itself.

## LEVELS OF COMPLIANCE

### “TESTED TO.....”

The first and most basic level of deemed compliance is when a product is “Tested to” the Standard.

“Tested to” means that a sample of the widget has been subjected to the defined test. It implies that product achieved the test criteria - but that may not in fact have been the case.

This “tested to” classification relates only to the sample of the product and to the sample test. It does not ensure that all similar products, if tested, would perform to the same level. Neither does it confirm that the testing equipment used was properly calibrated to ensure that the correct test criteria were applied, and that the test result was accurate. This level of testing and has limited value.

### “APPROVED TO....”

This is the second level of deemed compliance and is similar to “tested to” - except that this implies that the sample may have met the test criteria. Again, there is no indication that test apparatus was properly calibrated or whether or not the testing was carried out in-house or by an independent third party. The “approval” is generally issued by the manufacturing company without any independent proof or verification.

### **“COMPLIES TO / WITH....”**

If a product is said to “comply with” a Standard, it means that the product has been tested to the specific standard to verify it will meet the requirements of that Standard. This testing may or may not have been conducted by a third party. This “compliance” is verifiable on the provision of a testing certificate.

Even this level of “compliance” gives no indication on whether the manufacturer tests ongoing manufactured batches of product to verify that those batches of products - if re-tested in the same way - would pass the test process.

### **“CERTIFIED TO...”**

When a product has been “certified to” a Standard, it means that a product has been specifically ‘Type Tested’ in line with the test defined in the standard, on calibrated equipment and verified under the supervision of an accredited third party. As such, an independent product conformance mark can then be applied to the product.

When a product is “certified”, subsequent samples from manufactured batches of these products are also tested to the standard, or, where limited numbers are produced, they are tested at least annually to verify ongoing conformance with the Standard

Such certification marks are provided by companies such as SAI Global, BSI/Benchmark, Global Mark, Bureau Veritas and a number of others. The display of the certification mark from one of those certification companies ensures that the product performance Standard is consistently achieved in all production quantities.

### **SUMMARY**

If a product carries a certification mark, it is more strictly assessed for its ongoing ability to meet the appropriate Standard which includes, assembly and testing requirements, material compliance, product marking and instruction manuals where required.

In essence, it is a guarantee of quality conformance.

In line with the ‘Objects of the Association’, where an Australian / New Zealand product performance standard exists, the WAHA only supports/recommends products that display third party product certification to that Standard as a sign of assured quality and the manufacturer’s commitment to the safety of those that use those products.