

PRIVATE-SECTOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

A TOOL FOR GOVERNMENT

WHAT IS CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT?

Conformity assessment—including testing, inspection, verification, and certification—shows that a product, service, system, person, or body meets the requirements of a standard. U.S. law and policy call upon federal agencies to coordinate conformity assessment activities with those of the private sector to reduce duplication.

Key Laws and Policies

National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA, PL 104-113)

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-119 (OMB A-119)

Guidance on Federal Conformity Assessment (15 CFR Part 287)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PRIVATE-SECTOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT?

Energy-efficient consumer electronics. Safe toys. Qualified IT professionals and crane operators. Safe food.

What do all of these things have in common? Each is an example of how a U.S. government agency has relied upon private-sector conformity assessment to uphold quality and build confidence in a product, process, system, person, or organization.



Increases confidence, productivity, and global competitiveness for U.S. industry



Reduces agency resource requirements, and increases efficiency for regulated communities



Expands opportunities for international trade



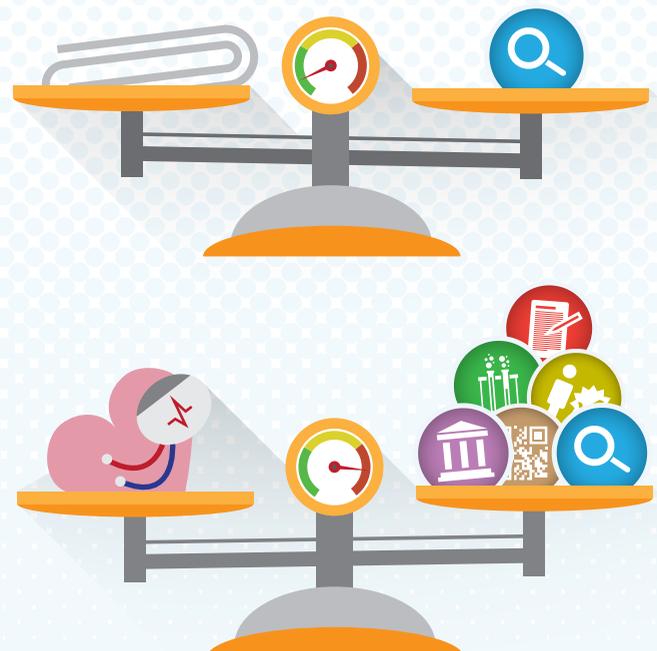
Taps into global networks of expertise via international organizations and agreements

THE SPECTRUM OF RISK: A BALANCING ACT

When it comes to goods, services, and personnel, there's a wide spectrum of risk. For example, the risk of non-compliance for produce or a pacemaker is much higher than a paper clip or a roll of paper towels.

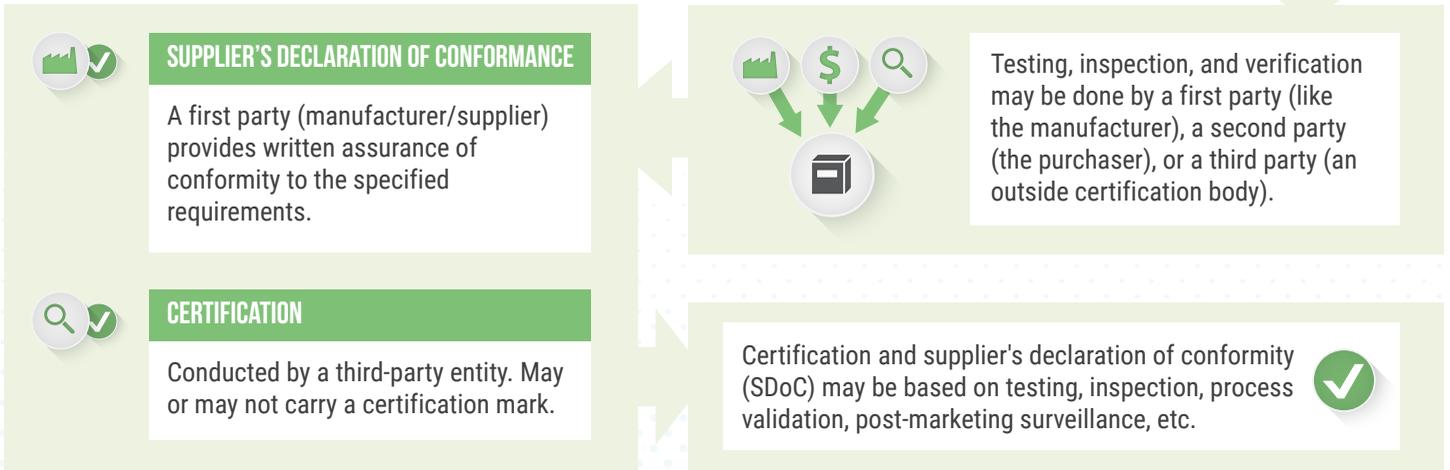
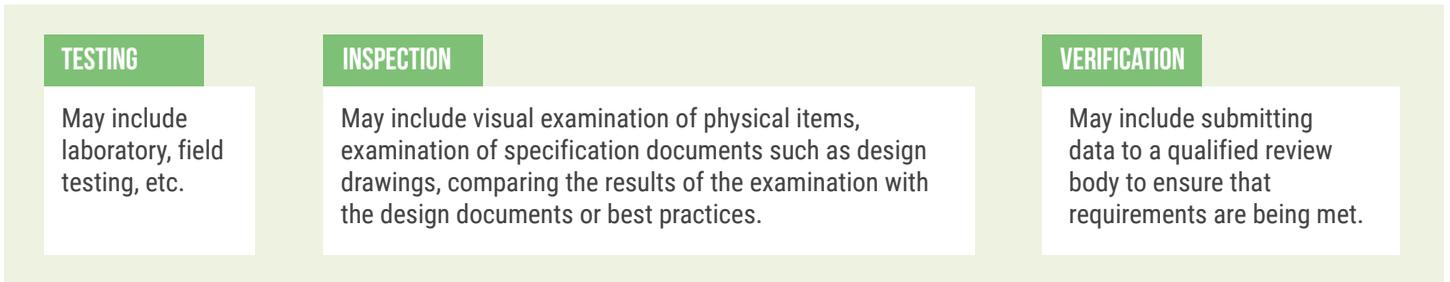
U.S. policy encourages government agencies to ensure that their conformity assessment programs are effective and appropriate in carrying out agency missions, conserve and leverage agency resources, and minimize burdens on regulated entities. This requires achieving an appropriate balance of risk and rigor.

The private-sector conformity assessment system offers federal agencies a broad spectrum of solutions to help achieve this balance.



WHAT ARE THE KEY PARTS OF PRIVATE-SECTOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT?

There are multiple ways to assure that a sample, product, service, or worker meets all the necessary requirements, such as:

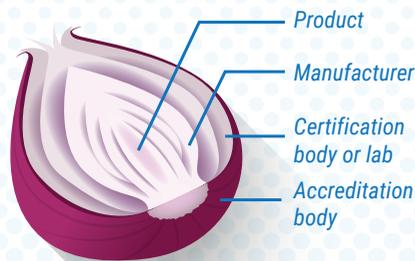


WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

Accreditation provides additional assurance that testing, inspection, verification, and certification are carried out by competent bodies, operating in accordance with international standards. In a very real sense, the accreditation body "checks the checkers." And when an accreditation body is a signatory to an international or regional multilateral arrangement, their accreditation is recognized by peers in other countries—boosting market acceptance and saving time and money. The ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) is unsurpassed in the marketplace in providing assurance of accuracy, quality, and competence.

www.ansi.org/accreditation

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



There can be many layers to bolster quality assurance, not unlike an onion. Say the center is the product and its design validation. Next are the manufacturer's in-process inspections. Further protections come from certification body audits and/or lab testing to verify safety parameters. Lastly is the accreditation body, which doesn't duplicate these other evaluations but provides an additional assurance that the certification body or laboratory is competent by assessing their conformance to international standards.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT, CONTACT:

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www.ansi.org/accreditation
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