



Foreign or Domestic: We've Got Our Standards

By Shahin Moinian, Senior Director IAPMO R&T

We've seen a lot of news stories lately about products from China being recalled due to safety concerns. Without question, such reports raise eyebrows here at IAPMO R&T, where protecting the public's health and safety has been central to our purpose for 72 years.

Let me begin by stating IAPMO R&T makes our services available to all manufacturers, domestic and foreign, so long as they meet the minimum requirements of the applicable codes and standards that govern their products. The country of origin is not a determining factor to what gains certification and what does not.

That said, I want to make this point clearest of all: No product will permissibly bear any of the IAPMO R&T marks of conformity unless it has met every rigorous requirement set forth by the corresponding codes and standards. We do not determine if a product is superior or inferior, we determine if it is compliant; and a compliant product is a safe product.

Since 1936, IAPMO R&T has provided building departments across the country a listing of products that have earned the right to bear our marks of conformity by showing compliance

(1) If changes have been made to the product, it still meets the same requirements.

(2) If a revision to the code or standard has occurred, the product meets the revised requirement.

IAPMO R&T has inspectors throughout the world, including a team of inspectors stationed in the Asia Pacific region, to examine products on a periodic basis as prescribed in section 13.4 of ISO/IEC Guide 65.

Half of our certification applicants do not receive listing on the first try. This includes the largest manufacturers and the smallest. A Technical Evaluation Sheet, a checklist of items that are non-compliant or missing altogether, is given to the client. If all requirements are not met within 90 days, the application is cancelled. This product will not go to market bearing an IAPMO R&T mark of conformity.

The same goes for products that fail continuous compliance. The products are suspended if non-conformances are found. The manufacturer is given 30 days to take corrective action. If proof of compliance is not submitted before the deadline, the product is delisted.

This happens from time to time — we do encounter failures. A vast majority of our clients, however, take the corrective action and maintain their listing. If not, R&T has a recall program that goes through legal channels to force the manufacturer to stop using our marks of conformity on their product and call back from the market every instance of that product bearing our mark.

Maintaining the integrity of our certification process is the key to ensuring only safe products reach the marketplace — and our credibility is rooted in many layers of accountability. IAPMO R&T itself must follow a strict set of guidelines as set forth by our two accreditation bodies: the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), which audit our process on an annual basis, including both certification and continued compliance. They also review the laboratories we recognize for testing.

IAPMO R&T takes our responsibility in determining which products meet the standards seriously, as our reputation and integrity aren't the only things at stake — most importantly, the public's safety and well being is riding on our uncompromised adherence to detail.

We will never allow our marks to be placed on anything that has not been deemed compliant, no matter where it was made.



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to the Uniform Plumbing Code. These marks of conformity give the Authority Having Jurisdiction complete confidence that products used in their jurisdictions meet all the applicable codes and standards in the United States as well as Canada.

When a manufacturer applies for certification, each product goes through a rigorous evaluation process, including an initial plant inspection and testing by an IAPMO R&T recognized laboratory to all applicable requirements. Evaluation of products also includes review of drawings, installation instructions, markings and sales literature by qualified engineers in corresponding disciplines. Listing/Certification also means continuous compliance to all applicable requirements. Product files are reviewed annually to assure two things: