keeping up with

Product Certification

By Stephanie Harris

Certification updates and benefits

Whether you are a water treatment dealer or a product manufacturer, product certification should be high on your list of priorities. In a world that is as competitive as ours, product certification can give you the edge you need over your competition.

"Product certification separates your products from other products in the marketplace," said Mark Unger, technical manager for the Water Quality Association (WQA). "Consumers are assured that a certified drinking water treatment system is safe to use and performs as the product packaging says it will."

Once a product is evaluated by a certification agency and deemed to meet the requirements of the applicable industry standard, the product, product literature and packaging will be allowed to bear the certification mark of the certification body. This mark sets the product apart from other noncertified products and gives consumers confidence by purchasing a certified product.

Dealers who sell and install certified products should be using this fact as a marketing tool for new or existing customers. By selling certified products, you can demonstrate that you care about your customer's health and well being, that the product you are selling meets industry standards and that it will perform exactly the way it claims it will.

As a water treatment dealer or product manufacturer, it is important that you stay up to date on certification and standardization updates. The following is a brief update to get you up to speed.

California Revises Waterworks Standards

The revised California Waterworks Standards, which went into effect on March 9, now formally requires certification for all drinking water treatment and distribution products used by public water systems.

The Waterworks Standards provide criteria in the design, construction and operation of public water systems. NSF/ANSI Standard 60: Drinking Water Treatment Chemicals—Health Effects includes requirements for chemicals that are used to treat drinking water, while NSF/ANSI Standard 61: Drinking Water System Components—Health Effects includes requirements for all devices, components and materials that come in contact with drinking water.

Certification of products to NSF/ANSI Standard 60 has been required in the California Waterworks Standards since 1994. The new regulations will now also require all treatment chemicals to be tested on an annual basis by an ANSI-accredited certification organization.

Forty-five states require chemicals to comply with NSF Standard 60 requirements, and 40 states require standard chemicals to be tested and certified by an ANSI-accredited organization. California, however, is the first state to require that chemicals be tested on an annual basis.

Certification of drinking water treatment and distribution equipment to NSF/ANSI Standard 61 has been specified by many water utilities in California for several years; however, the standard was not formally required in state regulations.

An Inside Look at NSF's New Lab Expansion

Last August, NSF International dedicated its newly expanded Ann Arbor, Mich., laboratories in a ceremony attended by U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (Mich.) and Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, among many others.

The staff of *Water Quality Products* recently toured the 80,000-sq-ft state-of-the-art expansion, which includes new laboratory, office, warehouse and conference room space.

The new space, with its forward-flow design, offers increased workflow efficiencies, improved ventilation to minimize cross-contamination and equipment that makes the lab easy to reconfigure when needed.

In addition to enhancing NSF's testing and certification programs, the new lab space also provides the technical resources necessary for the development of new programs and services.

"With this expansion, NSF is positioned to successfully compete in the global bio-tech industry," said Kevan Lawlor, president and CEO of NSF. "We are at the forefront of addressing critical public health issues, including protection of food and drinking water supplies, certification of sports nutrition and dietary supplement products and the development of standards for environmentally friendly products."

The lab expansion also employs advanced technology to assist in environmental protection efforts. The building was designed so that 50% of the electricity derives from renewable resources, and the laboratories, offices and conference rooms save energy through motion detectors that automatically activate and inactivate lighting. The new lab was also built with low-emitting paints, carpet, adhesives and sealants and composite wood.

One of the most notable green improvements, according to Lawlor, is the water reuse system in the Drinking Water Treatment Systems laboratory. An estimated 50% of the water used in this lab is produced from recycled NSF test water thanks to advanced water treatment technologies.

Total construction time of the expanded facility was just over a year and a half. *wqp*

The new edition of the California Waterworks Standards requires treatment and distribution equipment to be certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 61 by an ANSI-accredited organization. The state plumbing code has required that plumbing products be certified to Standard 61 for several years.

Gold Seal Update

The WQA has ensured its Gold Seal product certification policies comply with California's newly revised code, which officially adopted NSF/ANSI Standard 61 and revised the NSF/ANSI Standard 60 requirements that have been in the waterworks regulations since 1994.

In the Works

The WQA Gold Seal program is currently working with the WQA's retail section on the development of a "green" certification program. According to Thomas Palkon, director of product certification for the WQA, the program would include carbon footprinting and water-saving parameters.

The WQA is also planning to begin a lab expansion project this year. "We will be remodeling 7,000 sq ft of our building's lower level into new lab testing space, which will increase our testing capacity, shorten lab testing time, and allow us to complete tests more efficiently," said Palkon.

The WQA's Gold Seal program is currently completing product testing and certification within three months of test unit receipt; however, the timing does vary depending on the units' capacity and the claims the manufacturer intends to make, said Palkon.

NSF Update

NSF recently launched a new Beverage Quality Certification Program. The program expands the scope of NSF's bottled water program to test, audit and certify natural mineral waters, flavored and functional beverages.

With more than six billion gal of bottled water being purchased each year, consumers are looking for ways to choose products that meet the highest quality and safety standards. NSF's new Beverage Quality Certification Program helps consumers make informed decisions when it comes to purchasing bottled water and beverages.

UL Update

Underwriters Laboratory (UL) recently announced its new Water QualityCheck program, which will better enable managers of public or private facilities to identify and assess risks associated with drinking water quality.

By partnering with UL, facility managers may now be more proactive in assessing water quality risks such as *Legionella* and other potential contaminants. UL plans on extending the Water QualityCheck program in the future to other facilities such as hotels, resorts, offices and manufacturing plants.

The Water QualityCheck program specifically monitors and tests for biological and chemical contaminants in a facility's water supply that may have been previously overlooked. Currently, the Safe Water Drinking Act does not regulate for contaminants in a municipal water supply as it comes through a service line to a building and into the tap. UL's Water QualityCheck program will help facility owners better manage this gap. *wqp*

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