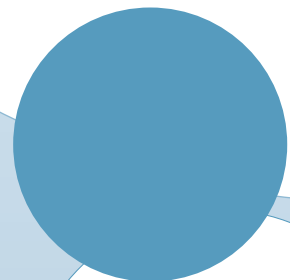
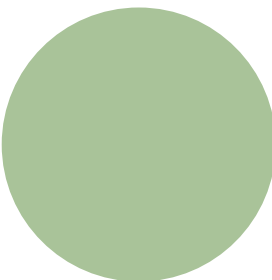
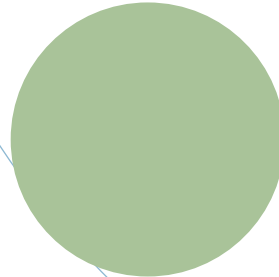
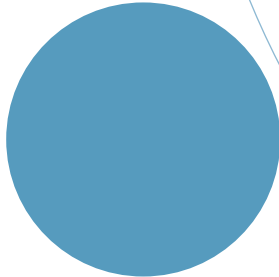
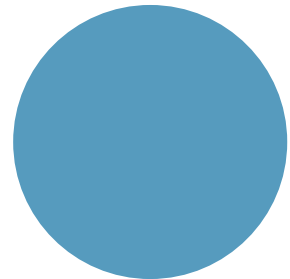




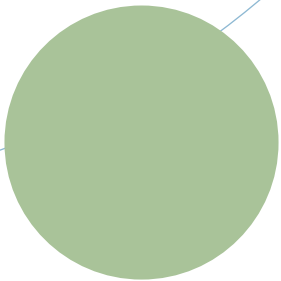
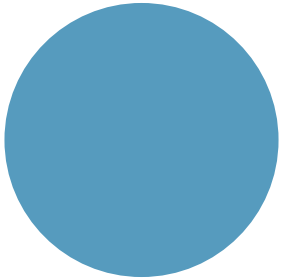
Standards Council of Canada  
Conseil canadien des normes

# NATIONAL CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES FOR CANADA



national **standards** system

Canada 



The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) is a federal Crown corporation with the mandate to promote efficient and effective standardization. Located in Ottawa, the Standards Council has a 15-member governing Council and a staff of approximately 80. It reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry.

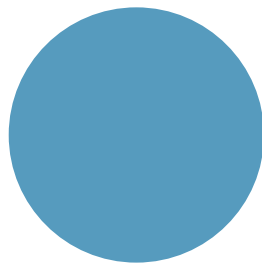
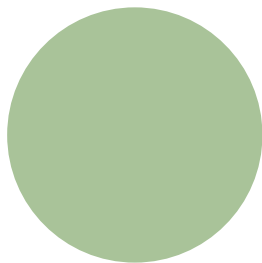
The SCC is Canada's representative to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). The SCC coordinates and oversees the efforts of the National Standards System and offers a variety of standardization-related programs and services.

**STANDARDS COUNCIL OF CANADA**

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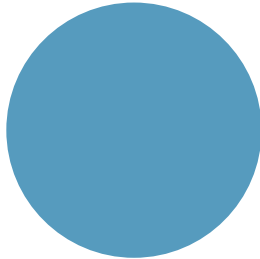
# **NATIONAL CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES FOR CANADA**



A national focus on the benefits of standards  
and conformity assessment

Working together towards a better quality of life

## UNDERSTANDING CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT



Examples of conformity assessment are all around us, every day, making our lives a little better, providing assurance that the products we use won't harm us, that their components will work, that manufacturers are effectively managing the impact of their activities on health, safety and the environment, and that services are being delivered in a consistent fashion.

In essence, *conformity assessment* is the practice of determining whether a product, service or system meets the requirements of a particular standard. The “*standard*” being the document that describes the important features of that product, service or system and, the essential requirements that it must meet.

Both within Canada and abroad, conformity assessment serves to reassure users and provide them with confidence in the integrity of products, services or systems. Conformity assessment helps ensure that products, services and systems meet the requirements of standards for consistency, compatibility, effectiveness, and safety. It is thus that standards and conformity assessment go hand-in-hand. Together they affect virtually every aspect of society and are vital to preserving and enhancing our quality of life.

Despite the simplicity of the definitions provided above, there are actually many facets and diverse activities that make up a national conformity assessment system. Among these activities is verifying the capabilities of those organizations that offer conformity assessment services, interacting with relevant international bodies, contributing to the reduction of potential barriers to trade and participating in the promotion of public health and safety.

Included in this document is a brief overview of the Canadian system, a list of the principles upon which it is founded and some of the most commonly used terms.

## THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

In Canada, a single national accreditation body—the Standards Council of Canada (SCC), coordinates conformity assessment activities. Considered one of the most comprehensive and well-coordinated national accreditation infrastructures in the world, the Canadian network of conformity assessment participants are interconnected by the SCC through our National Standards System (NSS).

The Canadian public, individuals and organizations who produce, market, import and export products, regulators and other authorities with jurisdiction, conformity assessment performers and their clients, as well as local, provincial/territorial and federal governments—are all implicated in this National System.

Having a National System based on a shared set of principles enables the entire country to benefit from the knowledge, experience and financial resources of the many dedicated stakeholders who voluntarily contribute to it.

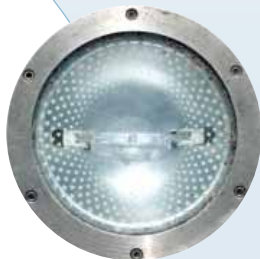
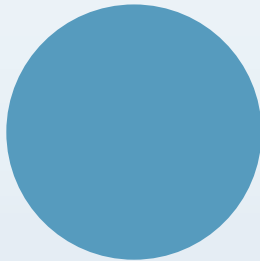
As a result of our collective efforts, the Canadian Conformity Assessment system is strong. This strength comes from a solid foundation, the underlying international guides, standards and protocols upon which it is built and, the key leadership role that the SCC plays both at home and in the international arena.



## CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

The underlying principles of Conformity Assessment (CA) in Canada, are that:

- 1) Conformity Assessment contributes to safeguarding public health, the environment and public safety.
- 2) Conformity Assessment is based on international standards, agreements and protocols without undue national bias.
- 3) Conformity Assessment upholds the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and, avoids creating unnecessary obstacles to trade.
- 4) Conformity Assessment operates in an explicit, credible, and transparent manner and, is accessible, equitable and fair in its treatment of all users.
- 5) Conformity Assessment services are delivered in a timely and professional manner, in accordance with an accepted code of ethics.
- 6) Information regarding Conformity Assessment requirements, accreditation procedures and results are made publicly available. Activities are conducted with due regard to confidentiality while ensuring full disclosure of CA results to regulatory authorities, as required.
- 7) Conformity Assessment is inherently voluntary. However, marketplace demands and/or government regulation may mandate specific CA requirements.
- 8) Multi-stakeholder input and involvement is solicited on Conformity Assessment topics as appropriate. These discussions and exchanges are consensus-based, foster a cooperative spirit and are considerate of the unique contributions of affected stakeholders.



## ACCREDITATION OF CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Accreditation by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) is formal recognition that an organization has demonstrated that it is qualified to undertake the conformity assessment role it has chosen.

The SCC accredits various types of conformity assessment organizations:

### Testing and Calibration Laboratories

A laboratory's quality and technical competence is assessed based on international requirements. Before becoming accredited, the facility is evaluated, its test procedures are reviewed and witnessed, and all its records are examined.

### Management Systems (QMS and EMS) Certification Bodies

Management systems certification bodies must demonstrate that they have met the international standard and are able to competently assess their clients' management systems. The SCC is the only Canadian organization that accredits management systems certification bodies.

### Personnel Certification Bodies

An organization's personnel certification services are evaluated to ensure that they have the credibility, impartiality and technical competence to in-turn assess the services of those organizations that fall within the scope of their accreditation.





### Product/Service/System Certification Bodies

Product/Service/System certification bodies are assessed for their competence to make certification decisions in areas covered by their scopes of accreditation and, their quality systems are evaluated for service delivery that is consistent with accreditation requirements.

### Inspection Bodies

An organization's inspection services are evaluated to ensure that they have the credibility, impartiality and technical competence to in-turn assess the safety and fitness for use of specific products and materials and, to confirm that the associated facilities, equipment and systems are appropriate to the work being performed. Inspections are not limited to physical assets and may also include an assessment of services.

### Auditor Course Providers

Organizations that offer courses and formal training for Quality Management System (QMS) auditors and Environmental auditors must demonstrate their competence to develop and operate an auditor training program.

Each of the SCC's programs is based on international standards and guides.\*

*\*Policies and procedures used by the Standards Council of Canada for accreditation purposes are defined within Canadian procedural documents (CAN-Ps). CAN-Ps may be adoptions or adaptations of international standards and guides. These are available at [www.scc.ca](http://www.scc.ca).*



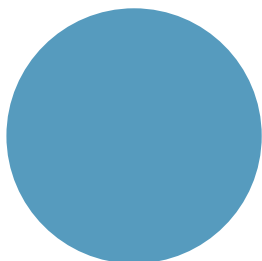
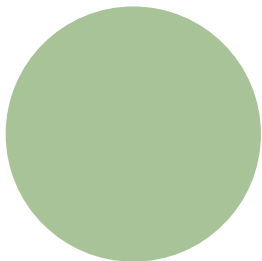
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

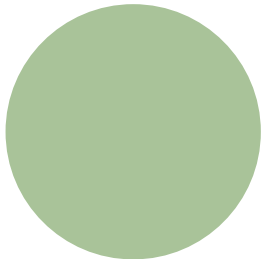
Confidence in Canadian products, services and systems is essential to Canada's participation in the global marketplace. Internationally recognized as a reliable indicator of technical competence, accreditation and other conformity assessment activities facilitate market acceptance by providing confidence that the applicable requirements are being met.

Technical regulations and product standards may vary from country to country. Having many different regulations and standards causes difficulties for producers and exporters. If regulations are set arbitrarily, they could be used as an excuse for protectionism. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) ensures that regulations, standards, testing and certification procedures do not create unnecessary obstacles to trade.

TBTs represent discrepancies in product requirements from one country to another and in approval and control procedures (testing, certification, etc.) for evaluating compliance with such requirements. There are both lawful and unlawful TBTs. For instance, product requirements designed to safeguard health, the environment, safety, etc., may be lawful TBTs.

To help ensure the international acceptance of Canadian conformity assessment results, the SCC is a member of a number of international and regional organizations that are developing conformity assessment agreements. As signatories to these agreements participating accreditation bodies (like SCC) recognize each other's accreditations as being equivalent to their own.





SCC-accredited conformity assessment bodies and their clients, all benefit from the SCC's status as a signatory to these international/regional agreements. In addition to boosting confidence and credibility, these agreements reduce the need for duplication of certain activities like assessment, registration or accreditation.

These types of agreements are fundamental to Canada's economic development and to its ability to participate in the established world trading system. Ultimately the goal is to arrive at a global accreditation regime that enables exporters, for example to use a single test, certification or registration to gain market acceptance anywhere in the world.

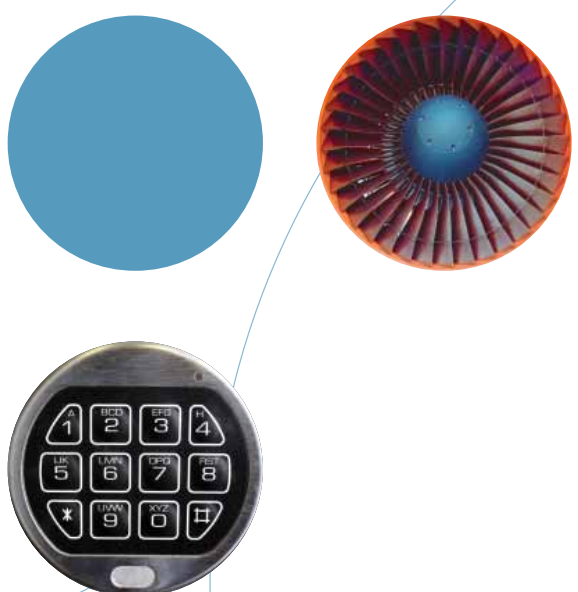
## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Beyond the trade sphere, standards and conformity assessment contribute to the basic infrastructure that underpins society. The health and safety of our citizens, environmental protection, sustainability and good regulatory practice, are all supported by Conformity Assessment activities.

In Canada, the responsibility to safeguard public health, the environment and public safety is shared by local, provincial and federal jurisdictions. Product/systems/services requirements are specifically designed to address these responsibilities.

Some product requirements may result in lawful TBTs that take precedence over international trade agreements. The regulation of electrical, fire, building, gas, plumbing and pressure vessel safety, for example, is the responsibility of Canada's provinces. The six model safety codes developed may contain unique Canadian requirements that address special needs of the regulators.

The Canadian Standards Strategy highlights the importance of the elimination of unnecessary TBTs through the harmonization of standards and codes with international requirements. The Canadian Electrical Code is



one that currently uses international (IEC) requirements for classifying hazardous location equipment. The European Union's adoption of the Pressure Equipment Directive (PED) has done much to reduce TBTs for manufacturers of stationary pressure equipment. Likewise, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code is the principal reference document used in the Canadian model safety code for pressure vessels.

The responsibility for public health, health of animals, food safety and food quality rests with the Canadian federal government. The import and export of agricultural products are subject to many safety-related TBTs invoked by Canada and by Canada's trading partners.

## DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

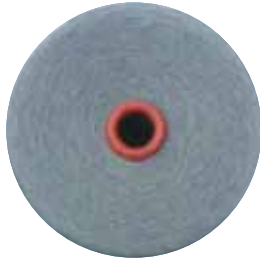
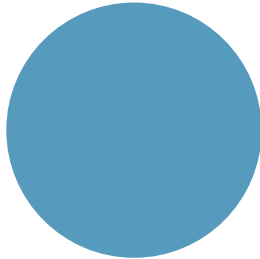
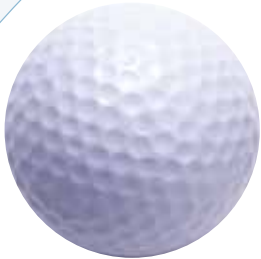
The international community defines **CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT** as the demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person or body are fulfilled. The field of conformity assessment includes activities such as testing, inspection and certification, as well as the accreditation of conformity assessment bodies.

**ACCREDITATION** is third-party attestation of a conformity assessment body's demonstrated competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

**APPROVAL** is permission by an official authority for a product or process to be marketed or used for stated purposes or under stated conditions. Approval can be based on fulfilment of specified requirements or completion of specified procedures.

**ATTESTATION** is the issue of a statement, based on a decision following review, that fulfilment of specified requirements has been demonstrated.





**CERTIFICATION** is third-party attestation related to products, processes, systems or persons. Certification of a management system is sometimes also called registration.

**EVALUATION** is the process undertaken to determine whether a product or system conforms to specific requirements.

**INSPECTION** is the examination of a product design, service, or process, and determination of its conformity with specific requirements; evaluation by observation and judgement accompanied as appropriate by measurement and testing.

**QUALIFICATION** is the formal acceptance, act or condition of meeting the requirements of a specific program.

**RECOGNITION** is the formal acknowledgement and acceptance of a body or persons' qualifications and/or status.

A **STANDARD** is a document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

A **TEST** is the technical operation that consists of the determination of one or more characteristics of a given product, process or service according to a specified procedure.

**TESTING** is the act of carrying out one or more tests.

**VERIFICATION** is the process of confirming that established procedures are being followed as stipulated.

**WITHDRAWAL** is the act of removing a designation that had been previously granted.

*The definitions provided are based on those established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in ISO/IEC Guide 2 :1996 and ISO/IEC 17000:2004.*