

Demand for IECQ Hazardous Substances certification continues to grow

Australia, China, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland, Thailand and the American state of California are among the countries that are considering, or have already passed, legislation limiting the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic products. European Union [RoHS](#) (Restrictions of Hazardous Substances) in electrical and electronic equipment and [WEEE](#) (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) took effect in July 2006, and a revision of those directives is currently under consideration.

Although hazardous substances may pose a health risk to workers handling them or to end-users, the main danger comes when the product is discarded. Rapid technology evolution and shorter life-cycles for products such as computers, mobile phones and multimedia equipment have resulted in a fast-growing excess of electronic waste around the globe. In general, legislation aims to provide for the creation of collection schemes where consumers can return their used e-waste free of charge. The objective of these schemes is to increase the recycling and re-use of such products. It also requires the substitution of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and chromium, and of flame retardants such as PBBs (polybrominated biphenyls) or PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers), with safer alternatives.

The issue is of the utmost importance to everyone – from the electronic component manufacturer who supplies printed circuit boards to the IT equipment company, to the consumer buying and then discarding the end product.

IECQ HSPM is part of the solution

Electronic component suppliers need to demonstrate that their products comply with requirements to be free of hazardous substances. The [IECQ](#) (IEC Quality Assessment System for Electronic Components) HSPM (Hazardous Substances Process Management) is a technically-based management systems approach to implementing and maintaining hazardous-substance-free products and production processes. IECQ HSPM was developed in response to the component manufacturer's needs to give suppliers the means to demonstrate, through third-party assessment, that their electrical and electronic components and assemblies meet hazardous-substance-free specific local, national and international requirements.

The [IECQ HSPM](#) Scheme, introduced in 2005, has proved to be extremely successful, with close to 2 000 certificates issued to date. Recently, two US-based IECQ Certification Bodies, [DNV](#) (Det Norske Veritas) and [UL-DQS Inc.](#), announced the issuing of their 100th IECQ HSPM certificate.

IECQ Chairman David W. Smith stated: "I was delighted to be able to present plaques on behalf of the US National Authorized Institution, the [ECCB](#) (Electronic Components Certification Board), and IECQ to representatives of both DNV and UL-DQS at the recent ECCB Board meeting in Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, Washington, USA, for achieving 100 IECQ HSPM certifications. These achievements reinforce the significant progress that is being made in the worldwide acceptance of IECQ HSPM, to specification [IECQ QC 080000](#), as the way for businesses to independently verify that their hazardous substance processes meet the appropriate 'green' requirements. I congratulate both DNV and UL-DQS once again and look forward to their 200-certificate milestones!"

This shows that demand for IECQ HSPM certification is growing fast as part of a global trend towards environmentally-friendly products and towards a higher level of responsibility on environmental protection. The need for environmentally-friendly products is expressed at all levels of society. In this respect, governmental agencies, legislators, industry and consumers are on the same wavelength. Reducing or eliminating hazardous substances from products is a major part of that effort. It is the success story of IECQ HSPM certification.

For a manufacturer, achieving IECQ HSPM certification sends strong signals of its commitment to the preservation of the environment, allows compliance with the strictest legislation in the field and opens new business opportunities worldwide, as attested by companies holding IECQ HSPM certification.



Al Engler (centre) between Condra and Smith, accepts a plaque on behalf of DNV



Lloyd Condra, ECCB Chairman, and Dave Smith, IECQ Chairman are pictured here with Harvey Berman, centre, accepting a plaque on behalf of UL-DQS for achieving 100 IECQ HSPM certifications

DQS-UL Group

DQS GmbH (German Registrar for Management Systems) and UL MSS (Management Systems Solutions) merged at the end of March, 2008. With their alliance, Germany's first certification body for management systems and the MSS business unit of America's most renowned product certifier UL (Underwriters Laboratories) achieved a place among the leading certification bodies for management systems in the world.

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IEC links

IECQ

IEC Quality Assessment System for Electronic Components

IECQ HSPM:

IECQ Hazardous Substances Process Management

IECQ QC 080000:

Electrical and Electronic Components and Products - Hazardous Substance Process Management System Requirements (HSPM)

External links

ECCB:

Electronic Components Certification Board

DNV:

Det Norske Veritas

RoHS and WEEE Directives

UL-DQS Inc.

