

Life Safety & Security Products



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About The ETL Listed Mark

What's the difference between the UL, CSA, and ETL Listed Marks?

Both marks demonstrate that the product that bears it has met the minimum requirements of widely accepted product safety standards as determined through the independent testing of a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL). And, as part of that testing regimen, the product manufacturer has agreed to periodic follow-up inspections to verify continued compliance. The only real difference between the Marks is in the service, and services, of the testing laboratory behind them. It's here that Intertek's clients enjoy the real differences between UL and ETL. Our custom-tailored testing, quick turnarounds, and flexible work methods are literally changing the face of the industry by promoting an environment where the testing lab and product manufacturer work more collaboratively. Together, we deliver products to market more quickly, more smoothly, and more cost-effectively than ever before.

What is an NRTL?

A Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) is an independent laboratory recognized by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to test products to the specifications of applicable product safety standards – such as those from Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and other standards-writing bodies. An NRTL's function is to provide an independent evaluation, testing, and certification of any electrically operated or gas- and oil-fired product. Intertek is recognized as an NRTL in the United States and, in a similar capacity, as a Testing Organization (TO) and Certifying Body (CB) in Canada, and as a Notified Body in Europe.

What are the specifics of the NRTL program?

The NRTL program is part of OSHA's Directorate of Technical Support. As part of OSHA's directive to ensure that products are safe for use in the U.S. workplace, the NRTL program recognizes the capabilities of private sector organizations to determine if specific products meet consensus safety standards. OSHA safety standards are United States law and can be found in Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). More specifically, the provisions for NRTL certification can be found within Part 1910 of the CFR (29 CFR Part 1910). It is important to note that OSHA's recognition of an NRTL is not a grant of government authority, but rather an acknowledgment of the organization's ability to perform product safety testing and certification within the scope of its OSHA recognition. For more information about the NRTL program, we encouraged you to visit the OSHA Web site at www.osha.gov.



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Aren't manufacturers required to use UL for their compliance testing? Isn't this mandated by the standards themselves?

The simple answer to both questions is "no." In fact, this misconception has misled many manufacturers to believe that they don't have a choice in their third-party testing partner. To satisfy the prerequisite of having your products tested by an independent organization, the true legal requirement is that the laboratory which performs the testing be a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) recognized by OSHA. Intertek is recognized worldwide as a competent testing, inspection, and certification organization, and our ETL Listed Mark serves as proof of product compliance with U.S. standards.

Will retailers accept my product if it bears the ETL Listed Mark?

Yes. Since the ETL Listed Mark is an accepted and recognized demonstration of product compliance, and Intertek is recognized as an NRTL, there is no reason why retailers should not accept products bearing the ETL Listed Mark. Any indication otherwise by an individual retailer or distributor likely stems from misinformation in the marketplace—the same misinformation that has led some manufacturers to believe they don't have a choice in their third-party testing organization. Intertek has taken a leadership role in educating the industry on the legal requirements behind regulatory compliance, and we continue to make great strides in helping those manufacturers and retailers who remain confused to better understand their true responsibilities to the marketplace and the competitive advantages we offer.

What should I tell my clients who aren't familiar with the ETL Listed Mark?

There is no standard formula for better acquainting clients and customers with the ETL Listed Mark. Depending on the background, circumstances, and other details of a given situation, the correct approach will be unique from one instance to another. Some clients' concerns can be relieved by simply showing them a list of the other respected products bearing the ETL Listed Mark (available in our Directory of Listed Products). Others may erroneously believe that the UL Mark is the only acceptable demonstration of product compliance and require a more thorough explanation of the true legal requirements behind third party product safety testing. It is important to listen closely to your client's issues and provide them with real answers to their concerns. Inform them about the NRTL program. Explain to them how our Product Safety Certification Program includes the same testing, listing, labeling, and follow-up inspection services as UL, and that we're accredited by the same organizations, agencies, and regulatory bodies. But perhaps most importantly, stress to them the ways in which Intertek is making conformity assessment a more flexible and accommodating process – so that they no longer see product safety testing as strictly an obligation, but as a process that can add value to their product development cycle(s) and help to speed them to market.



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What does the ETL Listed Mark mean when displayed on my product?

In short, the ETL Listed Mark indicates that your product has been tested by Intertek, found in compliance with accepted national standards, and meets the minimal requirements required for sale or distribution. To your distributors, retailers, and customers, the ETL Mark is assurance that the product is compliant with safety standards, having been tested and certified by a third-party organization.

What products bear the ETL Listed Mark?

Intertek provides a broad range of product safety testing and certification services for companies spanning multiple industries, markets, and applications. As such, the products bearing our ETL Listed Mark run the gamut from air conditioners to x-ray equipment. But for a comprehensive look at which products bear our mark, we invite you to look at our Directory of Listed Products online, which provides details on every product tested and certified by Intertek.

What countries accept the ETL Mark?

The ETL Mark is an accepted demonstration of product compliance in both the United States and Canada. However, it is important to note that through our scope of worldwide accreditations, Intertek is authorized to furnish the product safety marks required for sale and distribution in other countries. Such marks as the NOM Mark, CE Mark, GS Mark, and S Mark to name a few.

Do local inspectors know the ETL Listed Mark?

Yes. The ETL Listed Mark is recognized by local inspectors and Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) throughout North America and also in some areas of South America. As Intertek is an NRTL recognized by OSHA, the ETL Listed Mark is an accepted alternative to UL and, as such, inspectors and AHJs recognize, acknowledge, and accept the mark as proof of product compliance.