

What is the S Mark?

The S Mark is a symbol which shows that electrical and electronic products have been independently tested and certified by a third party, Intertek ETL SEMKO, and that they comply with applicable European safety requirements. As a part of the certification, a yearly inspection of the manufacturing site is included. The purpose of the inspection is to verify that the manufacturer has a well-functioning production control system, which ensures that the product always fulfils the requirements.

When the safety of electrical and electronic products is certified the products are tested for the following risks.

- Fire
- Electric shock
- Mechanical injuries
- Radiation injuries and burns
- Certain types of environmental damage

In:

- Intended or expected time of use
- Intended or expected manner of use
- Expected fault conditions
- Expected, reasonable misuse

The S Mark is a customer- and consumer-friendly mark which can be used in all EU countries. It conveys safety to the 450 million people who live in the EU: to customers, retailers and consumers.

What does the S stand for?

The S stands for safety. Throughout Europe, it does not matter how you say "Safety"... Sicherheit (German), Seguridad (Spanish), Sécurité (French), Sicurezza (Italian), Segurança (Portuguese), Säkerhet (Swedish). In Europe, "Safety" begins with S. The S Mark simplifies the sourcing of safe electrical and electronic products for both companies and consumers, no matter in which EU country they are buying.

What is the difference between the S Mark and CE marking?

CE marking is a legal requirement within the EU. It is done by the manufacturer, and it is not done by a third party testing laboratory. By CE marking the products the manufacturer certifies that the product fulfils the applicable European product safety requirements. The mark is not aimed at consumers; it is a certification to customs and inspection authorities. A product that is subject to CE marking requirements must be CE marked to be allowed to be sold in the EU. The CE marking cannot be compared with independent certification marks because CE marking does not require the products to be tested by a third party. Third party testing is only required for certain product categories.

The S Mark is a voluntary certification which shows customers and consumers that Intertek ETL SEMKO, as an independent testing laboratory, has established by tests that the products fulfil the European product safety requirements. The S Mark is complementary to the CE marking, but it does not replace it. Since the S Mark shows that the product fulfils the European requirements it gives the manufacturer a technical basis for CE marking. The S Mark is an

important complementary mark for many companies because it serves as a quality mark on products sold all over the EU.

Did the S Mark become less important when CE marking was introduced?

Since CE marking was introduced, the importance of the S Mark has increased. Since CE marking does not require third party testing, critical buyers, retailers and consumers look for products that have an independent certification mark which shows that the products fulfil applicable safety requirements.

Europe is becoming an increasingly unified market. Common regulations, changed buying behaviour, international store chains and (in some countries) a common currency are only a few examples of this. In a market with harmonised requirements, and where it is important to launch products quickly, the need has arisen for a simplified certification process and a European mark for consumers. Therefore, in October 2003, the former Swedish S Mark was relaunched as a European safety mark from Intertek ETL SEMKO – with the EU as a target market.

Who issues the S Mark?

The S Mark is only issued by Intertek ETL SEMKO.

Why does a company choose to S Mark its products?

Technical reasons

- By independent certification, the manufacturer/importer ensures that the products fulfil the legal product safety requirements within the EU.
- The S Mark certifies independently to all customers that the product fulfils the relevant requirements within the EU – the S Mark is accepted in all European countries.
- The certification makes the process easier. It gives the technical basis and documentation required for CE marking, which may be asked for by the authorities or customers.
- In the event of a liability issue, the certification is good evidence that the manufacturer has taken his/her responsibility.
- Gives increased safety for certificate holders with relocated production since it includes an annual inspection of the manufacturing site to verify that the manufacturer has a well functioning production control system. This ensures that the product always fulfils the requirements.

Sales/marketing reasons

- It makes market access within the EU easier since authorities and commercial players trust Intertek ETL SEMKO as an independent testing laboratory.
- It safeguards the brand of the product or the manufacturer/importer by avoiding safety deficiencies in the product, thus offering protection against claims for damages. The staff can sell the products confidently since they know the products are safe.

- The S Mark strengthens the importer's/manufacturer's brand by signalling that safety is an important issue to them. It is a customer-oriented mark which can be used in marketing and sales.
- The S Mark communicates safety (Sicherheit, Seguridad, Safety) throughout the EU, to 450 million people.
- Backing up CE marking with the S Mark can increase the sales. Surveys show that when a consumer is aware of the difference between the S Mark and the CE marking 80 % say that they prefer a to buy product that has been S marked.

How can the S Mark be used in marketing and sales?

The S Mark gives you an opportunity to express in your marketing activities your company's commitment to quality and safety. This is covered by the agreement with Intertek ETL SEMKO. ETL SEMKO supplies the S Mark to you in an appropriate format. You are not permitted to modify the logo or change its scale. There is a manual which explains in detail how to use the S Mark.

The logo is also available with the tagline "For your own safety" in different languages, which clearly communicates the objective of the mark. This version of the logo is a convincing marketing tool. The logo is available with the tagline in every European language.

Danish	FOR DIN EGEN SIKKERHED
English	FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY
Finish	OMAN TURVALLISUUTESI VUOKSI
French	POUR VOTRE PROPRE SECURITE
Dutch	VOOR UW EIGEN ZEKERHEID
Italian	PER LA TUA SICUREZZA
Norweigen	FOR DIN EGEN SIKKERHET
Slovak	PRE VAŠU VLASTNÚ BEZPEČNOSŤ
Slovene	ZA VAŠO VARNOST
Spanish	POR SU PROPIA SEGURIDAD
Swedish	FÖR DIN EGEN SÄKERHET
Czech	PRO VAŠI VLASTNÍ BEZPEČNOST
German	FÜR IHRE EIGENE SICHERHEIT

Examples of S Mark with different languages:



The history of the S Mark

The S Mark has been an icon for product safety since 1926, when certification became mandatory to protect consumers from dangerous products. Until 1990 it was mandatory to test and certify (S Mark) all electrical and electronic products before they were allowed to be sold on the Swedish market. When Sweden joined the European Union, requirements and standards were harmonised and national marks were seen as barrier to trade, and were therefore no longer mandatory. Instead, CE marking was introduced. The CE symbol is self-declarative and is affixed to a product by the supplier, not by a third party.

How many S Marked products are there today?

Today there are approximately 40 000 different products that are S Marked. You find the S Mark not only on consumer products like lighting, household appliances and home electronics, but also on, for example, industrial appliances, medical devices and components. You need only recognise one single mark to know that the product is safe.

How long is an S certificate valid?

The S Mark certificate is valid for five years. The certificate expires 60 months after the date of issue. If there have been no changes in the product or the standard, a new certificate can be issued after five years without new testing. If the certificate holder wishes to renew the certificate after a further five years the product must be retested.

What is product safety?

In the EU there is common product safety legislation. For most products there are directives which operate as legal requirements in the member states, and which the products must comply with. In order to determine whether the products fulfil the legal requirements, they are tested according to one or more standards. The product safety standards lay down, for instance, minimum limits for how the product must be constructed, what materials it must be made of, its immunity to overvoltages and test methods to verify the minimum limits. Examples of directives are the LVD (low-voltage directive), EMC (electromagnetic compatibility), MD (machine directive), R&TTE (radio and telecommunications terminal equipment).

According to EU legislation, the manufacturer and the importer are responsible for verifying that the product meets the requirements imposed on it. This means that the manufacturer (or, if the manufacturer is not within the EU, the importer) must conduct various tests to make sure that the product actually meets the requirements. The results of the tests, together with design drawings, lists of materials, circuit diagrams etc, must be kept in a "technical file" (or "technical dossier") by the manufacturer or the importer to the EU. When the manufacturer or his authorised representative considers that the product meets the requirements, an authorised signatory for the company signs a "Declaration of Conformity". The product is then marked with the CE symbol. CE-marking is mandatory for the product to be sold in the EU.

What is product liability?

Product liability means that a manufacturer, or an importer to the EU, is liable for damage and/or injury caused by a safety deficiency in a product. A safety deficiency may be a defect in the product itself, but could also be a deficiency in the instructions for the use of the product or in the marketing of the product. The manufacturer is obliged to ensure that there is no risk of injury to people or domestic animals, or of damage to property, when a correctly installed, operated and maintained electrical product is used.

About market surveillance

The government of each member country is responsible for conducting market surveillance to verify that products sold on the market comply with the product safety standards. When checked, the manufacturer must be able, within five days, to provide evidence (a declaration of

conformity) of how the verification was done. At the request of the authorities, the manufacturer should also be able to show the technical file. If the product does not fulfil the requirements in the applicable directives, or if the manufacturer cannot show the requested documentation, sale of the product may be banned, and all products on the market may have to be recalled.

Questions about the S Mark?

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