

Putting Your Test Results to Work: *How to Establish Low VOC-Impact Claims for Products*

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Introduction

You have two options for making a low-emitting product claim:

- Self-Declared Claim
- Third-Party Claim

In either case, if done properly, you can earn recognition for your product in the green building marketplace.



First-Party Claims



Self-Declared Claims – Overview

Self-declared claims share certain characteristics:

- The manufacturer makes the claim
- They often deal with a single issue (e.g. VOC emissions)
- They can be less expensive because they don't require third-party certification

But in order to be credible and withstand scrutiny, the product must be tested by a qualified laboratory to a publicly available and meaningful standard.



Self-Declared Claims – Role in the Marketplace

Credible self-declared claims:

- Promote product innovation
- Allow smaller manufacturers to compete in the marketplace
- Give all manufacturers more options
- And if done correctly, may be as valid as a ‘certified’ claim



Four Steps to Making a Self-Declared Claim



#1

Select appropriate standard (e.g., CDPH/EHLB/Standard Method V1.1)



#2

Select representative test sample of product(s) for which claim is sought (often specified by standard)



#3

Have sample tested by ISO/IEC 17025 accredited, independent laboratory



#4

If product sample conforms to standard, assemble documentation for claim:
a) Laboratory Certificate of Compliance
b) Manufacturers Certificate of Conformity



Select Appropriate Standard

Building Products (flooring, ceilings, walls, insulation, paints, adhesives, etc.):

- CDPH/EHLB/Standard Method V1.1, 2010

Office Furniture:

- ANSI/BIFMA M7.1-2007 & X7.1-2007
- ANSI/BIFMA e3-2010 Sustainability Standard

Classroom Furniture:

- CDPH/EHLB/Standard Method V1.1, 2010 with
- ANSI/BIFMA M7.1-2007 & X7.1-2007 and
- Collaborative for High Performance Schools, 2009 Criteria



Select Representative Test Sample

Standards may specify protocols for product sample selection – e.g., CDPH/EHLB/Standard Method, V1.1, Section 8:

- ✓ Must have pre-defined, written sampling plan
- ✓ Randomly select sample from typical production
- ✓ If manufacturing variables affect VOC emissions, select representative worst-case sample
- ✓ Can group products made with same methods & ingredients – use representative worst-case sample
- ✓ Maintain records & supporting data (e.g., justification of product group)



Test Product Sample with BkA

Test your sample with an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited, independent laboratory.

- ✓ BkA is [ISO/IEC 17025 accredited](#).
- ✓ BkA will freely answer ALL of your questions.
- ✓ BkA is 100% independent with no vested interest in any product label or certification program.
- ✓ BkA employs the most sensitive methods and equipment to ensure accuracy and reproducibility.
- ✓ BkA does not own your test reports—you do!



Assemble Documentation for Claim

If your test results demonstrate conformity of the sample to a standard, assemble documentation for your claim:

#1 – Laboratory Certificate of Compliance

Public document declaring conformity of test sample to standard



#2 – Manufacturer's Certificate of Conformity

Manufacturer's public statement of product conformity – i.e., bridging the gap between sample tested & product sold



Manufacture's Certificate of Conformity

In developing your Certificate of Conformity, you might refer to [CPSC General Certificate of Conformity Guidelines](#):

- ✓ Clearly describe product covered by certificate
- ✓ Identify applicable standards & regulations
- ✓ Identify date & place of product manufacture
- ✓ Identify laboratory & test dates on which certification is based

Part 2: Third-Party Claims



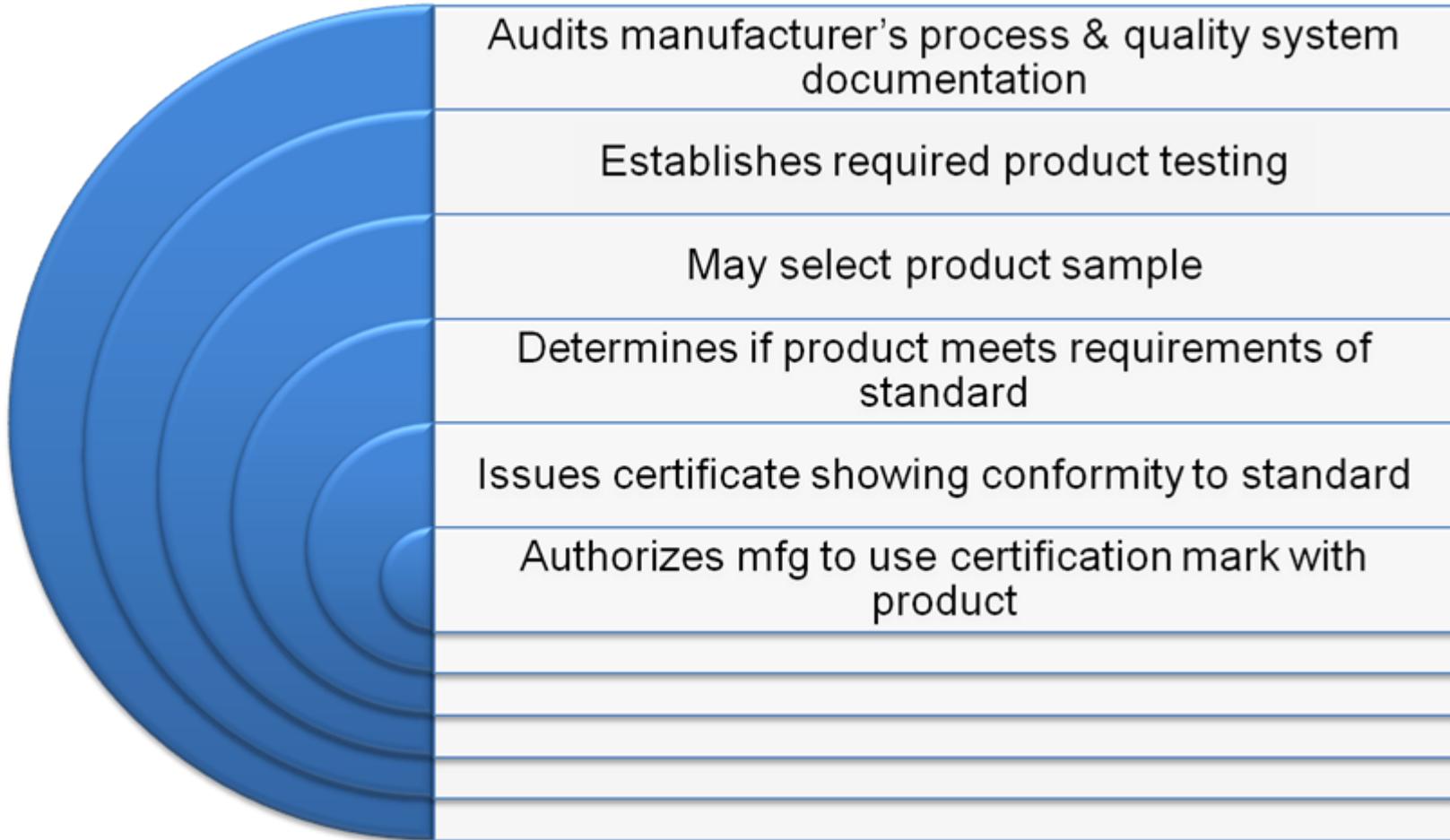
Third-Party Claims – Overview

Independent, accredited laboratory conducts VOC emission test



A third-party certifier audits and certifies the claim

Functions of Certification Body



*Adapted from CDPH/EHLB/Standard Method, V1.1, Section 8 –
'Guidelines for use of standard method as basis for building product claim'*

Berkeley Analytical Is Approved Testing Laboratory for Many Certification Programs



the BIFMA sustainability standard



Selecting a Third-Party Certifier

ISO Guide 65 establishes general requirements for bodies operating product certification systems. Consider asking prospective certifiers about their quality systems and documentation. ISO Guide 65 requires these basic elements:

- Section 4.5 – Document & operate effective quality system
- Section 4.8 – Make publically available documentation describing:
 - Rules & procedures for granting certification
 - Evaluation procedures & certification process
 - Fees charged
 - Rights & duties of applicants
 - Handling of complaints, appeals & disputes, etc.



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