

Philosophy behind the concept

A.1 The philosophy of writing 'Product Standards' is that such a standard shall contain normative requirements on the product, and not on any party involved in the manufacturing, testing or distribution of the product.

For the validation of the product requirements, test methods are given either in the product standards or in separate testing standards. For conformity assessment, the product standard and the related testing standard(s) cannot be seen separately. It is therefore self-evident that clauses that are not allowed in a product standard shall not appear in the testing standard(s) to which the product standard refers normatively.

In summary, it can be said that product standards and the related test standards shall describe WHAT and HOW, but not WHO.

A.2 For the sake of assessment of conformity of a product to a product standard, standards shall define which methods of validation (tests or calculation) are used for each of the specified characteristics of the product and which are the acceptance criteria i.e. the limits to be used for accepting or rejecting the result. Additionally, the test method(s) must describe clearly how the test is to be performed (selection and preparation of samples, use of testing instruments or test rigs, data to be recorded, etc.).

A.3 Basic principle for a product standard: it is the PRODUCT that is to be evaluated, NOT the PRODUCTION LINE. This means that the evaluation method can be used by ANY involved party on ANY individual product, including prototypes, samples from the production line, products supplied, etc. Clauses specifying that a certain number of prototypes, or a certain number of production types must be tested have no place in a product standard, because these are NOT requirements on an individual product, but on a production line or a manufacturing system.

Such requirements belong to a manufacturing quality system. It is through a quality system that a manufacturer can obtain assurance that the products coming from a production line conform to what he claims as characteristics of the product that is considered to be in conformity with a certain standard. However, the description of such a quality system does not belong to a product standard.

A.4 Requirements for the manufacturing process or delivery conditions shall not be included in a product standard. Delivery condition standards usually include criteria for accepting or rejecting a batch of products, and within this context they may specify sampling procedures, programmes of tests to be carried out, packing, documentation, etc.

Such requirements may be specified in a separate standard, provided that the title and scope of such a standard indicate the content clearly, and that the related product standard(s) do not include normative references to it. It should indeed be possible to prove compliance with a product standard without having to prove compliance with the manufacturing process criteria.