

FORCE Certification **ABC-USCG**

General conditions for certification of LSA-product according to USCG-rules and regulations

FORCE Certification
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Information about FORCE Certification A/S

FORCE Certification A/S is an accredited certification bodyⁱ, providing services within certification, verification and inspection of products, systems, and persons.

FORCE Certification A/S has been approved as a Recognized Laboratory by the United State Coast Guard (USCG) for the products mentioned on the USCG website: <http://cgmix.uscg.mil/EQLabs/EqLabsSearch.aspx>. Furthermore we operate as notified body (No. 0200) within a range of European Directives.

FORCE Certification A/S is an independent company in the FORCE Technology Corporation. The organisation of FORCE Certification A/S is based on the highest possible assurance of impartiality together with assurance of qualified personnel with technical expertise within the certification areas.

FORCE Technology is an independent non-profit institution approved by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Development as a GTS company (in Danish it is short for approved technological service). With its more than 1000 highly qualified employees, FORCE Technology is a capable partner and a leading Northern European supplier of testing and inspection services, which further means technical expert knowledge at an international level.

FORCE Certification A/S carries out certifications within the frames of this technical expert knowledge. Thus we can guarantee our customers a competent and value-based certification.

FORCE Certification A/S does not offer consultancy. International standards' requirements as well as similar requirements of impartiality can give certain limits in relation to the tasks to solve. It means for instance that FORCE Certification A/S cannot undertake a product certification task including a task as notified body if the involved employees within a time limit of 2 years have participated directly in the development, production, delivery, installation, use or maintenance of the product/system in question.

FORCE Certification A/S has established a Certification Committee, which has been delegated the responsibility for the technical quality of the certification activities and which shall assure that the activities are carried out impartially with reference to the approved procedures. The legal basis of the certification activities are regulations, which legally implements for example the EU Commission's directives in Denmark, national regulations and standards and technical instructions.

ⁱ Definition: As certification body all activities are included within certification, verification, inspection and notified body.

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General

The following describes the terms and conditions for conformity assessment of "Life-Saving Appliances" and for the maintenance of the certificate according to USCG-rules and regulations. The product shall be tested, and the test results must fulfil the requirements given in the relevant testing standards (USCG CFR, SOLAS and/or IMO).

Certificates are issued by USCG on basis of:

- pre-evaluation performed by USCG and FORCE Certification
- tests performed by FORCE Certification and reported to USCG.
- continuous inspections of the production performed by FORCE Certification

The principle of a certification of a LSA product is shown schematically in Annex A, from which it will appear that the issue of a certificate is the sole responsibility of USCG.

Requirements specified for type testing of products are described in chapter 4. A type testing is valid until changes are made to the product specifications and continuous inspections shows satisfactory results both to the USCG and FORCE Certification.

It must be verified by "on site inspections" at all production sites that the product is manufactured to the same quality, with identical materials and manufacturing processes as originally done by the tested product.

1. Application for product certification

The following activities must be carried out when a manufacturer applies for a product certification of an LSA-product:

- forwarding of application form together with the technical information as specified in the relevant CFR.
- Pre-evaluation performed by FORCE Certification A/S including samples of the product for the pre-evaluation
- Forwarding of product and pre-evaluation report to USCG
- preparation of a testing program according to the specified testing standard
- agreement on schedule for tests
- preparation and agreement of inspection program, if applicable
- travel and accommodation arrangements for the examiner, if applicable

2. Type testing

2.1 New products

Type testing includes the following activities:

- Forwarding of:
 - List of all materials
 - Detailed technical specification together with relevant production data
 - Product in relevant sizes and editions
- Testing according to test program
- Issuing of test report to USCG

2.2 Modified products

It is the obligation of the manufacturer to immediately notify FORCE Certification A/S in the case of foreseen modification of the product. Any changes may affect the product certificate.

If changes are made the following activities shall be performed:

- the manufacturer forwards the revised product specification to FORCE Certification A/S
- agreement on a supplementary test program will be prepared and confirmed by USCG and the program must be executed as described.

3. Initial inspection

The first inspection visit must take place when starting up of the first production lot. Second inspection visit will take place no later than three months after the first visit.

According to the regulation the control is to be carried out as follows:

1. The manufacturer and FORCE Certification A/S appoint and authorize a quality inspector independent from production to perform inspection of the products according to the approved inspection plan.
2. The manufacturer shall take all steps necessary for the manufacturing process to assure the homogeneity of the production and the conformity of the products with the type description in the USCG approval certificates and with the relevant basic requirements in the above regulations.
3. The manufacturer must always use and maintain the approved quality system and any changes of the system must be reported to FORCE Certification A/S in advance. Quality registrations, including inspection reports, testing and calibration data, reports concerning the qualifications of the personnel etc. must be documented, kept in a safe place, and be presented on demand.

4. Continuous production testing

The manufacturer is required to tests **each product or production lot on a statistical basis** to verify, whether the product/products fulfil the specified technical rules (e.g. CFR, IMO, SOLAS etc.)

Unless no production has taken place during the past three months these inspections will take place on a quarterly basis. Further FORCE Certification A/S may pay unannounced visits to the manufacturer during which the necessary inspection is witnessed and registered. These inspections take place without any fixed pattern.

The first inspection visit must take place when starting up of the first lot produced. Second inspection visit will take place no later than three months after the first visit.

5. Modification of the product

It is the obligation of the manufacturer to immediately notify FORCE Certification in the case of foreseen modification of the product. A product change may affect the certificate.

If changes are made, the following activities shall be performed:

- the manufacturer forwards the revised product specification to FORCE Certification
- FORCE Certification decides together with USCG whether supplemental tests are required. Is this the case, a test program will be prepared, and the testing performed.
- after completion with satisfactory results FORCE Certification forwards a test report to USCG

Minor changes to the quality system shall be announced to FORCE Certification during the continuous inspections, whereas major changes shall be announced to FORCE Certification immediately.

6. Rules for use of FORCE-certification mark

Any application of FORCE Certification A/S's certification mark (label approved by USCG) requires an agreement in writing with FORCE Certification A/S, while for application of the mark the following minimum rules apply:

- the mark must be reproduced in its entirety in a reasonable size and uniform color
- the mark may only be used in a manner which promotes the company's certified product
- the mark must not discredit the certification attained
- all use of the logo must stop immediately at the expiry of the period of validity of the certificate
- all use of the mark referring to the certificate must cease immediately if the certification is suspended, withdrawn, or cancelled.

FORCE certification mark is shown in appendix A. The mark must only be used on the product or product packaging.

7. Confidentiality

FORCE Certification treats all information gained by its staff or any sub-suppliers during the certification process as strictly confidential and will not pass on such information to unauthorised persons without the written consent of the manufacturer in question, see clause 1.

FORCE Certification has taken measures to ensure that confidential information is not accessible to unauthorised persons.

The manufacturer shall give our inspectors from FORCE Certification A/S (and USCG, if applicable) access to the products and the production. However we shall inform the applicant that we are obliged to notify USCG in the event of a refusal and keep USCG informed about the status of testing progress and any possible dispute between the manufacturer and FORCE Certification A/S.

8. Appeals and complaints

Should a manufacturer wish to make an appeal against a decision made by FORCE Certification this can be addressed within 4 weeks after the receipt of the decision to the Managing Director. Information on contact appears from www.force-cert.dk.

Should the manufacturer wish to make a complaint about a decision made by FORCE Certification in connection with:

- rejection of the manufacturer's application for testing
- the examiner not accepting type testing results or result of performed inspections.
- suspension or withdrawal request to USCG

Such a complaint must be submitted to the Director within four weeks after the decision in question has been made.

It should be emphasised that USCG takes decisions on acceptance of the product.

9. Publication

USCG maintains a list containing current and relevant information on all type approvals – please see <http://cgmix.uscg.mil/Equipment/EquipmentSearch.aspx>.

Annex A: Use of FORCE Certification label



Annex B: Technical documentation to be supplied by the manufacturer

The technical documentation must make it possible to understand the design, manufacture, and operation of the product, and must make it possible to assess compliance with the requirements of the relevant international instruments, CFR etc.

The documentation must, so far as they are relevant to assessment, include:

- a general description of the typeⁱⁱ,
- conceptual design, build standard and manufacturing drawings and schemes of components, sub-assemblies, circuits, etc.
- descriptions and explanations necessary for the understanding of those drawings and schemes, including the operation of the product,
- description of manufacturing tools e.g. stencil, shapes, models etc.
- the result of design calculations made, impartial examinations carried out, etc.,
- manuals for installation, use and maintenance.

Where appropriate, the design documentation must contain the following:

- attestations relating to the equipment incorporated in the appliance,
- attestations and certificates relating to the methods of manufacture and/or inspection and/or monitoring of the appliance,
- any other document that makes it possible to improve the assessment.

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Changes from 1st. edition:
- Editorial changes

ⁱⁱ A type may cover several versions of the product provided that the differences between the versions do not affect the level of safety or the other requirements concerning the performance of the product.