

Intertek: Quality and safety partner for the world's best-known brands

As products are increasingly sourced from developing countries, Intertek has expanded to provide services near manufacturing sites and buying offices, facilitating their quick response to market dynamics. Intertek offers a comprehensive range of testing, inspection, auditing, and certification solutions to help to meet increasingly stringent safety and quality standards. Their reputation for efficiency and rapid response has earned them the largest market share of textile testing in the world. Intertek is accredited to test according to an array of national and international standards, such as European Standards (EN), Australian Standards (AS), Deutsches Institut Für Normung (DIN), British Standards (BS), American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC), ASTM International (ASTM), the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), including to the new CPSIA, International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Intertek's global reach is major strength linking suppliers in one part of the world with buyers in another. They independently inspect factories and goods in the countries of origin across the whole supply chain on behalf of clients and consumers located in the products final market. In fact they can test the same product to a range of international standards. Intertek has 576 offices offering inspection, auditing and certification services and 338 laboratories worldwide providing a wide range of standard and customer testing programmes. For textile and apparel products, Intertek offers the following solutions: testing, certification, outsourcing, training, corporate social responsibility, inspection, auditing, advisory, quality assurance, risk management, sustainability, some of them are as follows:

Testing for textiles and apparel

In response to ever changing governmental regulations and the ever increasing consumer demand for high quality, testing is essential to minimize risk and protect the interest of both manufacturers and consumers. Intertek provides the following testing solutions for textiles and apparel:

Care label instructions: Many countries have mandatory or voluntary standards for care label instructions applicable to textile and apparel. Intertek conducts the following tests to determine the most appropriate consumer care conditions for the tested products:

- ❖ Colorfastness to washing, bleaching, and dry cleaning.
- ❖ Dimensional stability, appearance retention, and ironing.

Flammability testing: It is critical that materials used in apparel are in compliance with flammability regulations. In particular, adult apparel and children's sleepwear have specific requirements that must be acceptable before importing or selling a product. Regulations for upholstery, rugs and carpets should also be followed.

Eco-textiles testing: Consumers are becoming more conscious with respect to green activities, non-toxic and environment friendly consumer goods. They prefer products which pose no threat either to themselves or the environment. This trend for green consumerism has been extended to textile and apparel products. Major European and U.S textile buyers have responded to this public awareness by viewing their textile products from an ecological standpoint and have established certain requirements for textile products. Eco-Testing includes:

- ❖ Banned Azo Colorants and Ozone Depleting Chemicals.
- ❖ Heavy Metal and Pesticide Residues.
- ❖ Formaldehyde Content.

Performance testing: Intertek offers a variety of tests meeting specific performance standards related to consumer end use of textile products, including:

- ❖ Dimensional Stability to Washing and Dry cleaning.
- ❖ Colorfastness to Light, Crocking (Rubbing), Washing, Bleaching.
- ❖ Physical tests – Strength, Abrasion, Pilling Resistance.
- ❖ Chemical Tests – Finish Analysis and pH.

Feather and down testing: Intertek offers special feather and down testing for quantitative analysis, filling power, thermal properties, migration, and penetration resistance.

Fiber identification: Most countries importing apparel and soft home furnishing products require fiber identification labels indicating the fiber type and percentage of fiber components. Some countries even use fiber composition to classify quota categories. Intertek's experienced technicians can accurately identify fibers and fiber blends, including bamboo and cashmere.

Certification for textile, apparel and footwear

It is not enough to take appropriate actions in ensuring quality design and execution of textile, apparel, and footwear



products, but it is important to provide accurate documentation of such actions. Retailers can demonstrate due-diligence to authorities within the target markets through the certification of suppliers - therefore allowing, companies to gain consumers' trust through product safety reliance. Intertek provides the following certification solutions for textiles, apparel and footwear:

Chemical certification scheme: Based on the environmental protection requirement for consumer products in international markets, the chemicals used during the manufacturing process of all kinds of consumer products, such as textiles, leather, and footwear, are tested or certified to detect any restricted hazardous substances.

Eco-certification: The certification scheme applies to textiles, leathers and chemicals used in the processing of both textile materials, leather components and chemicals used in the processing of both textile and leather articles. Intertek Eco-Certification emphasizes that the manufacturers shall maintain a reliable quality assurance system of ecological products. The quality system implements strict quality assurance on incoming materials and chemical application related processes to remove all the restricted harmful substances from the very beginning without deviating from the original design - avoiding any contamination during the manufacturing process.

SA 8000 Certification: SA 8000 Standard was developed by Council on Economic Priorities Accreditation Agency (CEPAA), Social Accountability International (SAI) [website: www.sai-intl.org] that could be used across product lines and sectors as a definitive benchmark for social accountability standards. Intertek is approved for SA8000 certification and this certification is valid for a three-year period. During this period, Intertek will conduct surveillance audits to ensure that the facility is sustaining social accountability program. ♦