



1 July 2013

Frequently asked questions: CE marking
Target group: manufacturers

1. What is CE marking?

By affixing the CE marking to a construction product, the manufacturer is declaring that the characteristics of the construction product comply with a harmonised European product standard or a European Technical Assessment (ETA).

The goal is to improve the comparability of construction products by providing accurate and reliable information on the performance levels and characteristics of construction products. This promotes the free movement of goods within the EU area. Designers and consumers can easily compare the declarations of performance of construction products with each other, when the characteristics of the products are always declared in the same way. This also makes it easier to sell Finnish products elsewhere in Europe. Instead of the manufacturer having to acquire separate national approvals in each Member State, the manufacturer can affix the CE mark to the construction product. It will also be easier to import products into Finland, and this will give developers more purchasing opportunities.

CE marking became mandatory for most construction products when the EU Construction Products Regulation entered into force in its entirety on 1 July 2013.

2. By 1 July 2013, most construction products sold in the EU area must have the CE marking. What does this mean for a Finnish manufacturer of construction products?

The mandatory CE marking means that most of the construction products manufactured in Finland, among other places, must have the CE marking by July 2013. A construction product cannot be placed on the market in Finland or in any other European Union or European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country without the CE marking.

To get the CE marking, the characteristics of the product must be tested or reported in another way. Doing the tests and acquiring the documents may take the notified bodies a considerable amount of time, in some cases up to 1–2 years.

The mandatory status of the CE marking is clearly indicated in the EU Construction Products Regulation (305/2011), which is directly applicable in all of the EU Member States.

3. What are the prerequisites for attaching a CE marking to a construction product?

It is not possible to apply for a CE marking from the authorities, but instead the manufacturer of a construction product must evaluate the characteristics of the product and ensure that the quality control during production is in compliance with a harmonised European product standard or a European Technical Assessment.

CE-marking process:

1. Check if the product group is within the scope of any harmonised European product standard. This can be done by using the hEN Helpdesk (www.henhelpdesk.fi, in Finnish), which includes a search function for this purpose. Your own industrial association can also assist you.

If the product does not have a harmonised European product standard, CE marking is not mandatory.

However, if you want to have the CE marking for this kind of product, you can acquire a European Technical Assessment (ETA) for it. In Finland, European technical assessments are issued by VTT Expert Services Oy. The manufacturer can also use a competent technical assessment body in another country.

2. The harmonised European product standard sets out the actions required from the manufacturer, such as the characteristics of the product to be tested and how and by whom the tests must be carried out.
3. An external notified body specifically appointed for the task is often required for testing the characteristics and verifying the quality control. Reserve plenty of time for testing, because it may take up to 1–2 years. If desired, the characteristics that are not required by the authorities in the countries where the product is sold can be marked as “NPD” (No Performance Determined).
4. When the requirements of the harmonised European product standard have been fulfilled, and if necessary, when certification from a notified body has been issued (needed for product groups essential to safety and health), and a Declaration of Performance has been drawn up in accordance with the template in Annex III of the Construction Products Regulation (templates available at the hEN Helpdesk, www.henhelpdesk.fi), the manufacturer publishes the Declaration of Performance on its website and affixes the CE marking to the product or packaging or prints it on the delivery note.
5. Save the different versions of the Declaration of Performance and other documents related to the CE marking for a period of 10 years, and be prepared to present them to the authority carrying out market surveillance, if necessary.

4. To which construction products does the regulation apply and to which does it not?

Starting from 1 July 2013, CE marking is mandatory for most construction products when they are placed on the market. Construction products refer to products that will become a permanent part of the building, such as concrete elements, windows, sawn timber used in structures, rock material and road markings.

However, CE marking is not necessary:

- for products that are manufactured in a non-series process in response to a specific order, and that are installed in the construction project by the manufacturer;
 - The Commission has promised to define the "non-series process" at a later date.
- for products that are manufactured on the construction site, and that are installed in the construction project by the manufacturer;
 - For example, the CE marking is not needed for a concrete element that is cast on the construction site and that is installed into the building by the contractor.
- when the product in question is manufactured in a traditional manner for a historically significant building under renovation.
 - For example, the CE marking is not needed for a window that is made to order for a building designated as protected in the land use plan and that is required to match the original window.

5. How does the manufacturer of a construction product benefit from CE marking?

The CE marking indicates in a uniform manner the characteristics defined in the harmonised European product standard as characteristics to be declared for the product or product group. This makes it easier for the buyer to evaluate the suitability of products for a certain construction project. The manufacturer's opportunities for exporting a product with the CE marking to all European markets will improve, when, in the future, CE marking replaces the various reviews carried out separately and the other marks used by the authorities in each country.

6. What are the notified bodies?

The notified bodies are national bodies authorised to carry out the product testing required by the harmonised European product standards, and the verification of quality control.

The competent notified bodies in Finland can be found at the hEN Helpdesk (www.henhelpdesk.fi). All notified bodies can be found in the Nando database of the European Commission.

7. What is a harmonised European product standard?

A harmonised European standard or hEN is a product standard leading to CE marking that has been drawn up by CEN, the European Committee for Standardization, and that has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union. A harmonised standard is specific to product groups, and it gives the essential characteristics to be tested in the product, the production quality control requirements, and the information to be declared in the CE marking. The harmonised standards currently in use do not include the requirements laid down in the Construction Products Regulation. This means that they do not have instructions for preparing a Declaration of Performance, and the CE marking presented in them cannot be used after 1 July 2013. According to the current estimates, the standards prepared in accordance with the Construction Products Regulation will be introduced in 2015–2016.

8. What is a European Technical Assessment (ETA)?

A European Technical Assessment (ETA) can be issued for construction products not covered by a harmonised European product standard. The ETA is a voluntary technical assessment leading to CE marking, and it is intended for new products in particular. At the moment, VTT Expert Services Oy issues European Technical Assessments in Finland. The manufacturer can also use a competent technical assessment body in another country.

9. How do I draw up a Declaration of Performance?

A Declaration of Performance (DoP) is a declaration in a specified form, and the hEN Helpdesk (www.henhelpdesk.fi) has different templates available. The contents of the declaration are described in Annex III of the Construction Products Regulation. The Declaration of Performance is drawn up for those product characteristics that the harmonised European product standard defines as characteristics to be declared for the product or product group. Usually the approval of an authorised external party, that is, a notified body is needed to declare that the characteristics fulfil the requirements of the standard. The Declaration of Performance must be drawn up even if the harmonised European standard has no template available at the moment.

10. How can I find out if the product is already covered by an existing harmonised European product standard?

You can ask for more information about the harmonised standards and the products or product groups within their scope from your own industrial association. You can also use the hEN Helpdesk (www.henhelpdesk.fi, in Finnish), which includes a search function for this purpose.

11. Is a construction product with the CE marking automatically fit for use in Finnish or other European buildings?

National regulations by authorities still define the design of buildings, the use of construction products, and the construction projects.

For example, the Finnish building code sets requirements for the frost resistance of load-bearing structures and of the exterior face of buildings. The CE marking on a product does not automatically guarantee that the frost resistance of the product fulfils the requirements set by Finnish authorities, or even that the frost resistance of the product has been tested at all.

The designer is responsible for selecting the construction product. The users of construction products must always check if the values and classes of characteristics declared for the product in the CE marking also meet the national requirement levels.

12. What happens if the construction product does not have the CE marking by the deadline?

If a product on the market within the scope of a harmonised European product standard does not have the CE marking by the deadline, or if the CE marking of the product is defective, the manufacturer can be obliged to correct the defects or withdraw the product from the market.

If the CE marking is used on a product even though it does not meet the prerequisites for its intended use, the sale of the product or its use in construction can be prohibited. The manufacturer may either be obliged to withdraw the product from the market or alternatively bring the product into compliance with the requirements of the CE marking.

In Finland, the authority that monitors the use of the CE marking is the *Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes)*.

13. Where can I find out more about the national requirement levels?

There are product contact points for construction in all Member States, where you can ask about the national requirement levels of the Member State in question. You can contact the Finnish product contact point by sending an e-mail to the following address: sisamarkkinat@tem.fi.

The National Building Code of Finland includes the technical requirements on construction.

In addition, the Finnish Standards Association SFS and its affiliated standards-writing bodies have begun to prepare national application standards to complement the harmonised European standards; the national standards are published in the SFS 7000 series. These national standards present recommendations for the characteristics of CE marked products that should be declared in Finland for different intended uses, and if necessary, the performance levels.

Additional information:

www.ym.fi > Land use and building > Steering of construction > Construction product approval

www.ym.fi > Land use and building > Legislation and instructions > Legislation on building products

www.tukes.fi > Branches > Construction products

www.kkv.fi

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