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CERTIFICATION REGULATIONS

NF MARK

**FIRE SAFETY
PVC PIPES & CONNECTIONS
PVC FILMS
COATED TEXTILE BACKING**

PART 4

**CERTIFIED PRODUCT SURVEILLANCE PROCESS
MODIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT**

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4.1. CERTIFIED PRODUCT SURVEILLANCE PROCESS

LNE organises surveillance of certified products by carrying out verifications in the manufacturing unit or at commercial outlets. They are intended to check observance by the manufacturer of his obligations.

4.1.1. FREQUENCY OF VERIFICATIONS

At least 2 audits per year are conducted at the manufacturing unit.

Additional audits may be carried out at the proposal of the Mark Committee or following LNE's initiative.

4.1.2. VERIFICATIONS IN THE FACTORY AND AT THE GROUP'S LABORATORY:

The examinations carried out concern primarily any modifications made since the previous audit that affect manufacturing, inspection methods or organisation of the quality management system.

At each audit:

- a quality audit is carried out according to the general principles defined by standard NF EN 19011 concerning a quality audit (in particular, the scope and details of the procedures are specified in an audit plan sent to the company before the audit),
- a sample of products is taken from stock (or failing this during manufacturing) for tests at the Mark laboratory in order to check the validity of the results obtained by the manufacturer (see Para. 4.1.2.2.).

During the audit, the auditor has conformity tests carried out in his presence on accepted products, in order to verify the conditions under which inspections are carried out by the manufacturer. It is preferable to carry out these tests on the type sampled for tests in the Mark laboratory.

With the manufacturer's agreement, the auditor can take a copy of any document he/she considers necessary.

4.1.2.1. Quality audit

a) Case of companies with a certified quality management system

If the conformity of the quality management system has been recognised by certification awarded by an organisation meeting the requirements of standard NF ISO/IEC 17021 and recognised by AFNOR Certification or LNE, the verification of the quality management measures is reduced.

However, it includes obligatory verification of the special requirements imposed by the NF Mark (see Para. 2.2.2., Part 2).

The general requirements (Para. 2.2.1, Part 2) can be verified during the various annual follow-up audits by Gallup poll.

The audit reports drawn up by the quality management system certifying body must be sent to the auditor or consulted on site.

The duration of the audit is 1.5 days (including audit preparation, the audit itself and writing the report on site).

b) Case of companies without a certified quality management system

Verification of the quality management measures must include, at each audit, verification of the product realisation processes to confirm that the specific requirements of the NF Mark (Para. 2.2.2. Part 2) and the following chapters of standard NF EN ISO 9001 (2008) are observed:

- 7.5.3. Identification and traceability,
- 7.5.5. Preservation of product,
- 7.6. Control of measuring and monitoring devices,
- 8.2.4. Product monitoring and measurement,
- 8.3. Control of nonconformity,
- 8.5.2. Corrective action.

The other processes (and chapters of the standard) are verified during the various annual follow-up audits (in alternation).

In this case, the duration of the audit is normally 2 days (including audit preparation, the audit itself and writing the report on site).

At the end of the audit, the lead auditor prepares an audit report drawing special attention to the effectiveness of the quality system set up, the strong points, weak points and a commented report of nonconformities. It also includes the report of tests carried out during the audit and the sampling sheet.

If tests are carried out during the audit, the test report and sampling sheet must be attached to this report.

The lead auditor prepares 2 copies of this report and sends one to LNE. He gives the original copy to the holder.

The holder informs LNE of any corrective actions adopted following the detection of nonconformities.

4.1.2.2. Sampling:

The auditors take the samples required for the tests from the end of the manufacturing line and/or the storage warehouses.

The samples for testing by the Mark laboratory are taken for each product family (compact, structured-wall) from the pipe and/or connection samples requested by the manufacturer.

Quantities sampled per formulation, per LOI and per factory:

pipes

. one 4-metre pipe

connections

the sufficient number of connections for conducting the tests and chosen from the products subject to the acceptance application.

PVC films– coated textile backing

four rectangular 600x180 mm test specimens per sample: two in the longitudinal direction and two in the transversal direction.

Note: the manufacturer has to keep in stock all models of products for which a right to use the NF mark is requested until the visit of the agent responsible for the inspection.

A sampling sheet is drawn up.

The samples taken must be accompanied by information allowing the manufacturing batch to be identified.

They are marked by the auditor with a distinctive sign used to authenticate them later and sent within less than 15 days by the manufacturer, and under his responsibility, to the independent laboratory charged with carrying out the tests, unless the auditors decide to take charge of them.

4.1.3. TESTS

Samples are taken so as to best cover the range of accepted products. The inspections and tests specified are carried out in the Mark laboratory on the samples taken in accordance with the standardised methods and specifications of the standards stipulated in Para. 2.1. of Part 2, as in the table below.

TESTS	Number of tests	Next steps
PVC pipes and connections – LOI tests	1 test per sample	If the results do not conform, check the expansion rates through the expansion test using the cone calorimeter
PVC pipes and connections – Expansion test using the cone calorimeter	1 test per sample	If the results do not conform, LNE informs the manufacturer that the batches are blocked while the causes are looked for and corrective actions are taken. A new test is carried out within 15 days of LNE informing the manufacturer.
PVC films and coated textile backing – Electrical burner test	1 test per sample	- at the Mark laboratory

LNE sends the holder a test report on sampling carried out during the audit.

The holder informs LNE of any corrective actions adopted following the detection of nonconformities.

4.1.4. VERIFICATIONS AT COMMERCIAL OUTLETS

In addition to the previous measures, checks can be carried out on samples taken from commercial outlets or work sites, particularly following observations made during audits or at the Mark Committee's recommendation.

The test carried out on each sample product is the expansion test.

The pipe and connection purchasing costs, sampling and test expenses are paid for by the holder.

4.1.5. COMPLAINTS

If there are user complaints, the inspections may include sampling or tests at the places where accepted products are used (in this case the holder is invited to arrange for representation during the sampling and tests).

4.1.6. REPORT TO THE MARK COMMITTEE

A summary of all the inspections carried out is presented by LNE at least once a year to the Mark Committee.

The documents examined during each session of the Mark Committee must be presented in anonymous form.

Sanctions may be proposed by the Mark Committee, if necessary.

4.1.7. DECISION AND NOTIFICATION

On the basis of the inspection results and any proposals from the Mark Committee, LNE notifies the holder of one of the following decisions:

- a) Renewal of the right to use the Mark, with comments or request for corrective action, if necessary.
- b) Conditional renewal of the right to use the Mark with a notice to correct any detected breach, and possibly backed up with more inspections.
- c) Suspension of the right to use the Mark (suspension has a maximum duration of 6 months and is renewable once only. After this, withdrawal of the right of use is pronounced).
- d) Withdrawal of the right to use the Mark.

For sanctions b), c) and d), the fees for additional verifications are charged to the holder, regardless of their results. The decisions are enforceable as from the date of notification.

The applicant may appeal against the decision made. The procedure is set out in Article 12 of the General Rules of the NF Mark.

If there is a serious infraction of the certification regulations, LNE may, as a measure of conservation, after confirmation of the infraction, make any decision provided for above. The decisions are reported to the Mark Committee.

4.2. MODIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMPANY ORGANISATION OR CERTIFIED PRODUCT

4.2.1. MODIFICATION CONCERNING THE HOLDER

In the case of merger, liquidation or acquisition of the holder's company, any right to use the Mark that he might exercise shall cease automatically (see article 4.4 of the General Rules). The holder must inform LNE without delay of any decision likely to result at a later stage either in a modification of the company's legal status or a change in the company name.

LNE is empowered, after consulting the Mark Committee if necessary, to examine the means by which any new application might be accepted.

4.2.2. TRANSFER OF PRODUCTION SITE

Before any total or partial transfer of production to a different manufacturing site, the holder must inform LNE in writing, of the new production arrangements under consideration and cease making use of the mark until the latter makes a decision following an audit of the new manufacturing site and, if necessary, the case has been put before the Mark Committee (renewal of the right to use the NF Mark or examination of a new application, with reduced or full tests).

4.2.3. MODIFICATION OF THE ACCEPTED PRODUCT - NEW PRODUCTS

NF marked products shall conform to the technical file that was submitted with the application for acceptance, and shall take into account any observation made when the right to use the Mark was granted.

Consequently, any modification (including modifications concerning the manufacturing and inspection resources and the quality assurance system that could have a determining effect on production conformity) that the holder wishes to make on accepted products must also be communicated to LNE in writing.

An application for a new model and/or a new range takes the form of an application for extension of the right to use the NF Mark (forms 1a and 1c defined in Part 3 and updating of the file).

The modification is examined on the basis of the table below and cannot be implemented until LNE has given its agreement. LNE must make its response known (acceptance, preliminary inspections or referral to the Mark Committee) within 15 days.

The samples required for carrying out tests are sent by the holder and under his responsibility, to the independent laboratory charged with carrying out the tests. They must be marked in a way that allows later authentication and be accompanied by information allowing the material batches used for their manufacture to be identified.

Type of change	Application sent to LNE	Examination of the application	Extension notification conditions
Product modification	Application for extension	Tests	Authorisation granted by LNE on seeing the test results
Modification of production and/or inspection means	Application for extension with information on the modifications made	Examination on a case-by-case basis with possibility of conducting tests and/or audits	Authorisation issued by LNE on seeing the test results and, in the event of an audit, after consulting the Committee.

4.2.4. TEMPORARY STOPPAGE OF PRODUCTION OR INSPECTION

The holder must inform LNE immediately of any temporary stoppage of production or inspection of an accepted product.

If production is stopped for less than 6 months, LNE, after consulting the Mark Committee, can notify the holder of the suspension or withdrawal of the right to use the Mark for the products concerned.

If the stoppage lasts 6 months or more, the holder must ask for temporary suspension of the right to use the mark (maximum duration: 1 year). After this period, the right of use is withdrawn.

If production is restarted, the manufacturer must notify LNE which will carry out an audit before the products are marketed under the NF Mark.

4.2.5. DEFINITIVE STOPPAGE OF PRODUCTION OR SURRENDER OF THE RIGHT OF USE

If the holder ceases production of an accepted product definitively or if he surrenders the right to use the Mark, he must inform LNE, indicating the time he considers necessary for depletion of the remaining stock of products bearing the Mark. LNE lays down the conditions under which this stock can be depleted, after seeking the Mark Committee's opinion if necessary.