



CE MARKING AND GS MARK – THE DIFFERENCES

The CE marking is a manufacturer’s self-declaration that their product conforms to applicable requirements. In contrast, the GS mark is issued by an independent third party that verifies the conformity of a product with statutory safety and health requirements. Here, we summarize the most important information about those two marks.

CE Marking (CE= Conformité Européenne = European Conformity)

With the CE marking, the manufacturer declares that the product meets the applicable requirements specified in the harmonization legislation of the European Union. The CE marking is targeted at national regulatory authorities and therefore not a quality seal or seal of approval, but an administrative mark - a European „passport“.

GS Mark (Geprüfte Sicherheit = Tested Safety)

The GS mark is a voluntary test mark. It is issued by a third party that is independent from the manufacturer. Consumers (your customers) can assume that they are not risking their safety and health during the intended and foreseeable use and during the foreseeable misuse of your product. The GS test mark offers the consumer an important decision-making aid and increases trust and confidence in your products.

CE vs. GS – key facts at a glance		
Information	CE Mark	GS Mark
		
Introduction	1993	1977
Use	Mandatory	Voluntary
Issued by	Manufacturer	Independent testing and certification body
Legal background	EU regulations	German Product Safety Act (ProdSG)
Target group	National regulatory authorities	Consumers
Function	Administrative mark	Quality seal
Testing performed by independent institution	No	Yes
What is verified?	Compliance with directives	Safety

1. Are the monitoring measures conducted by an independent authority?

That is generally not the case with the CE mark. Checks should only be conducted if they are based on a statutory regulation by the EU. In contrast, with the GS mark, monitoring measures ensure that only products that correspond to the tested type are being placed on the market. With GS mark testing, non-compliant products can usually be improved by the manufacturer, so that the test mark can be awarded. Products tested by an independent institution typically have a lower safety-related risk than products that were not tested.

2. Can the CE marking and the GS mark be used together?

Yes. Because they have a different significance and scope, both marks can be used together on one product.

3. Can I use the CE marking or the GS mark to advertise for my product?

The CE marking is a declaration by the manufacturer that is relevant solely for market rights. Consumers can easily get the impression that it is a seal of quality. To prevent this misconception, the CE mark must not be used for advertising. Manufacturers may use the GS mark to advertise their products. The test seal can be affixed to products, packaging, advertising materials etc. and can be used to differentiate products from the competition.

4. How can the reliability of a mark be ascertained?

The key factor to voluntary marks such as „Geprüfte Sicherheit“ (GS mark) is that it can be verified. Anyone can make up a label and print and affix it – it is up to the consumers and their interest groups to verify what is behind it. TÜV Rheinland GS marks can even be checked by consumers directly in store by scanning an affixed QR code that is linked to our portal www.certipedia.com.

5. How are cases of misuse monitored?

GS bodies are under obligation to take action against manufacturers who use their GS mark in an unauthorized manner. Certain measures include admonishing an unlawful user, involving the German Center for Protection against Unfair Competition (Wettbewerbszentrale) or enforcing injunctive relief. Violations of the CE marking regulations are punished by the authorities as an administrative offense and are subject to a fine. In the event of a danger to life, health or someone else's property, there is the possibility of a penalty payment or even imprisonment.

6. Can all products carry a CE and/or a GS mark?

No. The CE marking is only affixed to products defined under specific harmonized statutory regulations of the European Union, such as toys and electrical household appliances. If those harmonized statutory regulations don't exist, the CE marking must not be affixed. An example for those products is furniture or mechanical gardening tools. Similar rules apply to the GS mark. There are products that may not carry the GS mark such as antiques, used products or medical devices as specified in § 3 of the Medical Devices Law.



Do you have additional question or need support? Our product testing experts are here to assist you. Please contact us now!

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