G-mark and GSO Conformity Tracking Symbol (GCTS) - FAQ

We answer Frequently Asked Questions regarding the new marking requirements for products made available on the common market in the GSO member states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

GSO has published the guidance about the Rules for the Use of the GSO Conformity Tracking Symbol (GCTS). All products that are subject to conformity assessment involving a Notified Body under one of the GSO Technical Regulations shall bear the GCTS and meet the requirements in this guidance. (Reference document: GSO_GCTS_Rules_V0)

As announced by GSO the implementation of this requirement will start from 1st January 2017 and become mandatory for all concerned products from 1st April 2017.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the transition period for implementation of the marking requirements?

The general requirement for G-marking is in effect since 1.1.2014 for toys and 1.7.2016 for electrical appliances and equipment in List(2). In June 2016 GSO announced implementation of the G-marking including the Notified Body (NB) number and a QR code for tracking as a mandatory requirement from 1.1.2017 for concerned products.

The recently published rules for the GSO Conformity Tracking Symbol (GCTS) clarify the existing requirements in certain detail aspects, like proportions, minimum size etc. and clarify the required positions of the marking. As announced by GSO the implementation of these rules will start from 1st January 2017 and become mandatory for all concerned products from 1st April 2017.

We are exporting sanitary wares to one of the GCC countries. Are our products required to use the GCTS marking from January 1st, 2017?

No, at the moment only the following categories of products under the Gulf Technical Regulation for Low Voltage Electrical Equipment and Appliances - BD-142004-01 (GSO LVTR) or the GSO Technical Regulation On Toys: Second Edition - BD-131704-01 (GSO Toys TR) that are subject to conformity assessment involving a Notified Body are required to bear the GCTS:

- Products within List No. (2): TC143307-01 of the GSO LV TR
- Toys requiring a NB type examination (e.g. toys non-conforming entirely to Gulf standards)
- Imported toys where the importer is not linked to the manufacturer

Other products which are subject only to national rules and conformity assessment programs of the country concerned, e.g. Kuwait KUCAS, U.A.E. ECAS, Saudi Arabia SASO COC, and not in scope of the above mentioned regional GSO Technical Regulations are not required to be marked with the GCTS.

We are importing toys which are subject to the self-declaration procedure described in Annex IV. Do we need to register our products with a Notified Body to obtain a GCTS marking in addition to the G-marking?

No, at this stage only products that are subject to conformity assessment involving a Notified Body are required to be marked with the GCTS.

Otherwise the marking requirements of the GSO Toys TR and the Gulf Regulation on G Marking - BD09100501 apply as before.

Is the marking on the products the same as the symbol shown on the Gulf Type Examination Certificate or Certificate of Conformity issued by the Notified Body?

No, the certificate tracking symbol follows Fig. 1.2, while the GCTS for product marking has to follow Fig. 1.3-a, Fig. 1.3-b or Fig. 1.4 (see below).
Should the GCTS include the Notified Body (NB) number (XXXX) along with the registration number (YYYY) below the G-mark when used on the products?

No, the GCTS marking on the products shall contain only the NB number.
Example: XXXX = 0007 for TÜV Rheinland Hong Kong
The marking with registration number (e.g. 0007-1234) as shown in Fig. 1.2 may only be used by the Notified Body for traceability marking on the Gulf Type Examination Certificate (GSO LV TR or GSO Toys TR) or Certificate of Conformity (GSO Toys TR – imported toys).

Can the graphics downloaded from the GSO Certificate Tracking System and provided by the NB to the manufacturer be used directly for marking on the products?

No, the GSO database currently only generates the tracking symbol to be used by the NBs on their certificates. Therefore at this moment manufacturers have to design the GCTS according to the rules and dimensional requirements in the guideline, in particular Fig. 1.3-a or Fig. 1.3-b.
TÜV Rheinland Retail Services can support manufacturers with preparation of compliant artwork designs of the regulatory markings required by legislation.

Where can we download or obtain the QR code for our certified product?

The QR code is contained in the tracking symbol on the certificate which can be obtained from the Notified Body.

Where can we obtain the G-mark in print quality?

The GCC Conformity Marking (or in short: “G-mark”) can be downloaded as high-resolution image from the GSO website in the section “Home » Activities » Conformity » Regulatory System » GC Marking” or using this link: Shape of GCC Conformity Mark-High Resolution

Is the rectangular frame around the G-marking, NB number and QR code required?

Yes, the frame is an essential part of the GCTS and shall fulfil the dimensional requirement of min. 0.25pt line thickness (see Fig. 1.3-a and Fig. 1.3-b).
Our product is too small or irregularly shaped, so the GCTS in the required dimensions cannot be properly affixed or the QR code would be unreadable. How should we mark our products in this case?

If the size or nature of the product does not permit using the markings as shown in Fig. 1.3-a or Fig. 1.3-b then a simplified marking consisting of the G-mark and the NB number only may be used in exceptional cases (see cl. 1.5.1 and 1.5.2, Fig. 1.4).

If this is also not possible then the marking on the product itself or its label could be omitted and the GCTS only be used on the product's packaging and user instructions or other accompanying document, as described in Art. (18) of the regulation and cl. 1.5.3 of the GCTS rules.

Please see the flowchart in the Annex of this document for illustration.

With the GCTS on the product label already, do we still have to use the marking on the product packaging and user manual?

According Art. 1.5.3 the GCTS marking shall be affixed to the product packaging and accompanying documents (for example instruction manual) in any case, no matter whether the marking has been applied in full or reduced form or even omitted on the product or its label in accordance with cl. 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 of the GCTS rules.

Marking on shipping carton is optional, but recommended to facilitate customs inspection.
We have already marked our products with the tracking symbol from the certificate and shipped out the goods to GCC. Also markings on the packaging or user manual are not available, because this was not clear before the GCTS rules were published. The products will only arrive after January 1st. What should we expect?

The GCTS guideline was just circulated to all Notified Bodies very recently, so this may be a commonly found situation. As announced by GSO the implementation of the requirements will start from 1st January 2017 and become mandatory for all concerned products from 1st April 2017. We suggest you consult with your importing agent or local representative on any specific requirements by the local customs authorities in charge. At the same time it is highly recommended to implement necessary modifications as early as possible.

Why is it required to show the tracking symbol on the product and packaging as well as the user instructions? This seems to be unreasonable effort.

The background of the implementation of the GCTS system is that the products shall be traceable to their origin and permit verification of the certification status in different stages of the supply chain and the product’s lifetime to avoid unsafe or counterfeit products or fraud. The verification can be performed by traders, customs officers, distributors, market surveillance inspectors, consumers and other concerned parties. While the packaging is most accessible in transport and display of the goods, consumers tend to discard the packaging after purchase and installation. After a few years of use only the instruction manual or the marking on the product itself may remain.

The user manual provided with the product covers also other models which are registered under a different certification. How should the GCTS be used in this case?

The GCTS markings of all products covered by the instruction should be shown in this case.

Can the GCTS marking be affixed with a sticker or a hang-tag?

Any permanent, legible, indelible method of affixing the marking can be accepted as long as the requirements in the guideline are fulfilled.

Can the GCTS be supplied within the packaging on a document other than the instruction manual, for example the warranty card or an additional information sheet?

According to the rules it shall be contained on the “accompanying documents”, with the user manual being referred as specific example. Other marking options may be acceptable under this requirement, if justified by the specific situation.
Regarding the packaging, are both the retail gift box and the transport carton box considered as “outer packaging”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primarily the GCTS shall be marked on the product itself, the instruction manual and the product’s displayed retail packaging (gift box). Shipping cartons may be marked in addition in order to facilitate product inspections during customs clearance.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Our products are manufactured in different locations around the world and sold under different brand names. We have received separate certificates for these cases. How should we mark the products?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The product marking must be traceable to the Notified Body certificate which is related to the specific product. For example, the same type of product is manufactured in Factory A in China, or alternatively in Factory B in Malaysia. Products are sold under Brand X in GCC country 1 and Brand Y in GCC country 2. As a result 4 separate certificates have been issued and 4 separate registrations exist in the GSO database. In this case each combination of factory origin and brand name must be reflected in the certificate registration in the GSO database which is linked by the QR code on the product label, packaging and instruction manual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Rules for the use of the GSO Conformity Tracking Symbol GCTS

GCTS shall be easily visible, readable and permanent and shall be readable by a scanner or reader application of a smartphone and for any enlargement or reduction shall retain the same proportions.

GCTS may be reproduced in either black and white, positive or negative, or in a color scheme as detailed in the GSO rules document.

GCTS shall not be used in conjunction with the logo/mark of the notified body.

Disclaimer:
This document is prepared by TUV Rheinland Group and shall not be duplicated or reused in parts or in full without the written permission of the author. The information contained is reflecting the understanding and knowledge of the concerned regulations at the time of writing and is subject to change without prior notice. Any provided information or interpretation beyond the text of the regulations or rules issued by the concerned authorities shall not be understood as legally binding or authoritative and is provided for information purposes only. The correct and compliant implementation of the regulatory requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the economic operators or authorities.

TUV Rheinland shall not be held liable for any damages or claims arising from the application of this document.

Source: GSO_GCTS_Rules_V0

© TÜV Rheinland Group