

NRTL Listings/Certifications

Nationally Recognized Test Laboratories (NRTLs)

The objective of this special edition is to provide background information regarding NRTL certification and listing in general. Further, specific discussion regarding Surge Protective Device (SPD) Certification and Listing will be provided.

By way of background, Nationally Recognized Test Laboratories (NRTLs) are certified by only one organization - that is OSHA. A good overview is provided below:

The NRTL Program recognizes mainly private sector organizations that provide product safety testing and certification services to manufacturers. The testing and certification are done, for purposes of the Program, to U.S. consensus-based product safety test standards. These test standards are not developed or issued by OSHA, but are issued by U.S. standards organizations, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or UL. The range of products covered by the Program is limited to those items for which OSHA safety standards require "certification" by an NRTL. The requirements mainly affect electrical products.

An NRTL is an organization that OSHA has "recognized" as meeting the legal requirements in 29 CFR 1910.7. In brief, these requirements are the capability, control programs, complete independence, and reporting and complaint handling procedures to test and certify specific types of products for workplace safety. This means, in part, that an organization must have the necessary capability both as a product safety testing laboratory and as a product certification body to receive OSHA recognition as an NRTL.

OSHA's recognition is not a government license or position, or a delegation or grant of government authority. Instead, the recognition is an acknowledgment that an organization has necessary the qualifications to perform safety testing and certification of the specific products covered within its scope of recognition. As a result, OSHA can accept products "properly certified" by the NRTL. "Properly certified" generally means: 1) the product is labeled or marked with the registered certification mark of the NRTL, 2) the NRTL issues the certification for a product covered within the scope of a test standard for which OSHA has recognized it, and 3) the NRTL issues the certification from one of its sites (i.e., locations) that OSHA has recognized. (Resource: OSHA Website)

With specific regard to Surge Protective Device Certification/Listing, the industry is beginning to see various NRTL certification bodies providing the listing service. Most prevalent are Underwriters

Laboratories, Inc. (UL), TUV, MET, ETL and CSA. Of these, it is becoming apparent that UL and CSA are the most widely accepted with ETL catching on quickly. One question that may be asked is, "if all of these organizations are NRTL certified, does that mean they are all the same"?