

DPIIT NOTIFIES QUALITY CONTROL ORDERS FOR 'SMART METERS' AND 'WELDING RODS AND ELECTRODES'

Relevant for: null | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry has notified 2 new Quality Control Orders (QCOs) for 'Smart Meters' and 'Welding Rods and Electrodes', on 14th July 2023. The QCOs will come into force six months from the date of notification.

The Smart Meters (Quality Control) Order, 2023 QCO mandates compulsory certification under IS Standards for "A.C. Static Direct Connected Watt Hour Smart Meter Class 1 and 2" and "A.C. Static Transformer Operated Watthour and Var-Hour Smart Meters, Class 0.2s, 0.5s and 1.0s" for the products manufactured for domestic market or imported into India.

Smart Meter is an electronic device that records information such as consumption of electric energy, voltage levels, current and power factor. Smart meters communicate the information to the consumer for greater clarity of consumption behaviour and electricity suppliers for system monitoring and customer billing.

The Welding Rods and Electrodes (Quality Control) Order, 2023 mandates compulsory certification under IS Standards for "Covered electrodes for manual metal arc welding of carbon and carbon manganese steel", and "Welding rods and bare electrodes for gas shielded arc welding of structural steel", for the products manufactured for domestic market or imported into India.

Welding Rods are used in shielded metal arc welding (SMAW), also known as stick welding. The rod has two purposes, i.e., to provide filler metal to the workpiece and to conduct electric current to the arc. Further, welding electrodes are metal wires baked on chemical coatings. The coating protects the metal from damage, stabilizes the arc, and improves the weld.

DPIIT in continuous consultation with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and stakeholders has been identifying key products for requiring implementation of QCO. This has led to the initiation of development of 64 new QCOs covering 317 product standards.

DPIIT is focusing on establishing a quality control regime for its key products such as insulated flasks, potable water-bottles, flame-lighters, smart meters, welding rods & electrodes etc.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, while emphasizing on the importance of manufacturing quality products said –"With our people's ability and the nation's credibility, Indian products of top quality will travel far and wide. This will also be a true tribute to the ethos of Aatmanirbhar Bharat- a force multiplier for global prosperity".

Quality control ecosystem in India is based on the standards developed by BIS, the National Standards Body of India. BIS is engaged in the activities of Standardization, Conformity Assessment and Quality Assurance of goods, articles, processes, systems and services. The Indian Standards established are voluntary in nature which can be made compulsory by the Central Government through issuance of a Quality Control Order (QCO).

QCO is a mandatory certification scheme, whereby compliance to specified list of Indian

Standards applicable to the concerned product is made compulsory by the Central Government under various considerations including public interest, protection of human, animal or plant health, safety of environment, prevention of unfair trade practices and national security.

Prior to the notification of the QCOs, extensive stakeholder consultations with key industry associations and industry members were conducted for their inputs. The draft QCOs were then approved by the Hon'ble Commerce & Industry Minister followed by legal vetting by the Department of Legislative Affairs. Subsequently, the QCOs were uploaded on the World Trade Organisation (WTO) website for 60 days, inviting comments from WTO member countries.

In order to safeguard the domestic small/micro industries, ensure smooth implementation of the QCO and Ease of Doing Business, relaxations have been granted to small/micro industries in terms of timelines.

With the implementation of the QCOs, manufacturing, storing and sale of non-BIS certified products will be prohibited as per the BIS Act, 2016. The violation of the provision of the BIS Act can attract a penalty of imprisonment upto two years or with fine of at least Rs 2 lakh for the first offence. In case of second and subsequent offences, the fine will increase to Rs 5 lakh minimum and extend up to ten times the value of goods or articles.

The implementation of the QCOs for these products is crucial not only for safety of the consumers, but it will also only improve the manufacturing quality standards in the country and curb the imports of sub-standard products into India. These initiatives, coupled with development quality testing labs, product manuals etc. will aid in the development of a quality ecosystem in India.

With the aforementioned initiatives, the Government of India aims to develop world-class products of good quality in India, thereby fulfilling the Prime Ministers' vision of creating an "Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

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