

An Introduction to NSF/NSSEA 380 School Supplies and Equipment Standard and Certification Program

About the Standard

The school supplies and equipment industry has investigated methods to ensure product safety and compliance across all its product categories. The development of this standard is an innovative and transparent approach to accomplish this goal throughout the school supplies and equipment supply chain.

The standard will incorporate mandatory legislative standards along with other testing schemes to assure products are both safe and in compliance. The products will be evaluated by physical and mechanical testing, chemical analysis and determining volatile organic compositions. Designed to simplify the process for retailers, buyers and manufacturers, this NSF program is founded on consensus-based requirements, with balanced input from product manufacturers, retailers and regulatory agencies in coordination with the National School Supplies and Equipment Association (NSSEA).

NSF/NSSEA 380 is being developed to:

1. Increase the value of school supplies and equipment throughout the supply chain by addressing market demand for safe products;
2. Provide information that enables decision makers to sort out the complex information on safety elements;
3. Educate and instruct all stakeholders in the school supplies and equipment supply chain; and
4. Encourage competition between manufacturers, distributors and their suppliers to seek out or develop more efficient and safer manufacturing processes, practices, power sources, materials and ultimately, products in the marketplace.

About the Certification Program

An NSF International Certification Program for School Supplies and Equipment will be developed in conjunction with the NSF/NSSEA 380. The certification program will provide an international benchmark for manufacturing processes in these product categories. It will address safety concerns for specific product types, including: seating products, desks and tables, visual communication products, audio-visual equipment and carpets and flooring for products that target the kindergarten through 12th-grade school-setting market. Agreed-upon test methods and certification requirements for product quality, performance and material safety will be specific to consumer use and customized by product category.

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The certification assessment criteria for School Supplies and Equipment Manufacturing and Distribution Certification are divided into three categories:

1. Product Design
2. Manufacturing Processes
3. Product Testing

Each of these three criteria will be evaluated and a point-based scoring system will be applied. The final scores will determine eligibility for NSF Product Certification. Procedures will be in place to regularly monitor and measure continued performance of products to this standard and certification criteria on an annual basis.

About the National School Supplies and Equipment Association (NSSEA):

The National School Supply and Equipment Association is the leading trade organization for the educational products industry. Founded in 1916, NSSEA promotes an open market for quality educational products and services that are produced and delivered by professional suppliers and dealers. The mission of NSSEA is to serve the educational products market by providing high-quality tradeshows that increase the productivity of the channel; networking opportunities to build relationships with trading partners; and market information and training on which to make solid business decisions.

About NSF International:

NSF International (www.nsf.org) is well positioned to assist NSSEA with its goal of establishing a consensus-based standard and a health, safety and environmental certification program for K-12 products. NSF International is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental, third-party organization, and has been a leader in standards development, product testing and certification, education, and risk-management for the protection of public health and safety for more than 65 years. While focusing on food, water, consumer products, and the indoor environment, NSF develops national standards, provides third-party conformity assessment services and provides learning opportunities through its Center for Public Health Education while representing the interests of all stakeholders. NSF is widely recognized for its scientific and technical expertise in health and environmental sciences. Its professional staff includes engineers, chemists, microbiologists, toxicologists and environmental health professionals with broad experience serving the needs of both public and private organizations.

Contact Us

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