Implement a Hazardous Substance Process Management System for Electronics

Mandatory diversion programs that move the cost of managing waste electronics (‘e-waste’) from municipalities to the companies that produce, sell or distribute electronics products, such as TVs, computers and printers, are becoming more common in Canada. But an increasing trend across the world is to require electronics producers to manage and control the hazardous substances found in these products *before* they become e-waste. In addition, consumers are showing more and more of a preference for ‘green’ products, including those made through ‘green’ processes that minimize the use of hazardous substances.

If your company produces electronics or electronics components, you can use a standard from the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) to implement a hazardous substance process management system. And if you’re a manufacturer of another kind of product, this standard, QC 080000, may still provide useful guidance on setting up a management system for any hazardous substances you may use in your processes. A whitepaper by Intertek gives a helpful overview of the standard.

QC 080000 BASICS

According to Intertek, the IEC Quality Assessment for

Electronic Components (IECQ) designed QC 080000 to establish a set of internationally recognized criteria for manufacturers of electrical or electronic components or products for assessing hazardous substance compliance with the many existing laws and regulations in various countries and the expectations of consumers. It's a proactive, effective and cost-efficient approach to managing, minimizing and eliminating hazardous substances in such products and their production processes. By providing a comprehensive process management specification, QC 080000 allows for better management of all hazardous substance processes, regardless of the exact legal requirements a company is trying to meet. The standard is intended to help companies:

- Satisfy both customer and international hazard substance-free requirements;
- Determine and document the technical aspects of the hazardous substance levels in products and processes;
- Develop procedures and process controls to ensure technical compliance with hazardous substance requirements; and
- Provide the necessary training, process tools and infrastructure to ensure sustainability.

Getting your company certified as compliant with QC 080000 tells regulators that it's processes are effectively controlling hazardous substances. Third-party certification may also

- Provide a strong showing of compliance with applicable laws;
- Ensure a sustained competitive advantage; and
- Assist in driving business integration and continuity of process control throughout the supply chain.

Conveniently, QC 080000 was written to work within the framework of ISO 9001, the international standard for quality management systems. In fact, before seeking certification to

QC 080000, your company *must* be certified as compliant with ISO 9001 or one of its derivatives, such as ISO/TS 16949, ISO 13485, TL 9000 or AS9100. But both standards may be assessed concurrently.

Except for minor differences, the audit process for QC 080000 is very similar to that of ISO 9001, with annual assessments and a certificate that's valid for three years. Once your company is certified, its certificate will be posted on IECQ's website.

***Insider* Source**

'What You Need to Know about QC 080000,' Intertek, www.intertek-sc.com

E-Waste Statistics

The increased use of technology has also increased the amount of e-waste generated each year. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that 20 to 50 million tonnes of e-waste are generated each year worldwide. In addition, Intertek says:

- The US generates at least **four million** tonnes of e-waste annually;
- The European Union generates at least **six million** tonnes of e-waste annually (equal to 13 kg per person) and is expected to generate **12 million** tonnes annually by 2015; and
- China generates at least **1.1 million** tonnes of e-waste each year.