CERTALARM SYSTEM

CERTIFICATION RULES

PART 4:
Procedures for confirmation of continued consistency of results

DOCUMENT NUMBER R-04

FOREWORD:

The CERTALARM Quality Mark (the Mark) has been established to provide a single Quality Mark, recognised throughout Europe and globally, for products, systems and services in the Electrical and Electronic Fire & Life Safety and Security industries.

In order to provide assurance to the specifier and user that the product, system or service consistently meets all requirements of the relevant European or other specified standards, it is essential that there is consistency in operation between Certification Bodies, between Test Laboratories and between Inspection Bodies working in the CERTALARM Scheme.

CERTALARM AISBL, the owner of the CERTALARM Quality Mark therefore requires all such Certification Bodies, Test Laboratories and Inspection Bodies to take part in the consistency programme operated for this purpose.

AUTHORSHIP and COPYRIGHT

This document was prepared by the CERTALARM Technical Advisory Group and approved by the AISBL Board of Directors.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The official version of this document is English.

It may be translated as required into other languages, but in case of dispute, the English version will remain the definitive version.

LATEST VERSION

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CERTALARM Scheme: Comparison Programme

Procedures to ensure consistency in operation between Certification bodies, between Test Laboratories and between Services Inspection Bodies

CONTENTS:

1. SCOPE

This document defines the processes referred to in "CERTALARM System: Certification Rules - Part 1: Definition of procedures and conditions for testing and certification" for use in ensuring consistency in operation between contracted Certification bodies, between recognised Test Laboratories and between recognised Services Inspection Bodies working within the CERTALARM Scheme.

These procedures will be administered by CERTALARM Management in cooperation with the bodies responsible for accreditation of the various entities involved.

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

EN ISO/IEC 17000	Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles
ISO/IEC Guide 43	Proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparison Parts 1 and 2.
CERTALARM System: Certification Rules Part 1	Definition of procedures and conditions for testing and certification

3. DEFINITIONS and ABBREVIATIONS

For the purposes of these procedures, the definitions given in EN/ISO 17000 "Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles" should be used, along with the those included in CERTALARM System: Certification Rules – Part 1: Definition of procedures and conditions for testing and certification, and the following:

3.1 CERTALARM TAG

Technical Advisory Group made up according to the Internal Rules of Procedures of CERTALARM AISBL. The personnel will be nominated specifically for their technical expertise in the design, manufacture and test of equipment, provision of services or of third party inspection, testing and certification.

3.2 Comparison test

Test conducted by Test Laboratories working within the CERTALARM Scheme to provide the basis for the assessment of consistency of results.

3.3 Comparison test round

A single operation of comparison tests, which is part of an ongoing series of comparison tests.

3.4 Participant

Conformity assessment body taking part in comparison test round.

4. ORGANISATION

4.1. The General Manager of CERTALARM Management shall coordinate the comparison test scheme, using the technical expertise of the CERTALARM TAG.

4.2. The TAG will be able to draw upon additional expertise, eg the manufacturer of a component selected as a test subject for advice on configuration for test purposes and recommendations for storage, etc.

4.3. The chairman of the TAG, in conjunction with the General Manager of CERTALARMManagement, shall arrange for selective attendance at meetings when necessary to discuss results, or otherwise ensure the anonymity of results.

4.4. Each organisation (ie CERTALARM, Certification Bodies, Test Laboratories and Inspection Bodies) shall bear their own costs of operating this comparison test scheme.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5.1. The CERTALARM TAG shall set out a comparison test plan for recognised Test Laboratories to ensure that all critical aspects of consistency in operation are assessed during a 4-year period.

Note: this does not require that every standard under accreditation be assessed where there are strong similarities between associated standards.

5.2. The CERTALARM TAG shall document the procedures for the scheme rules compliance audit for contracted Certification Bodies and recognised Services Inspection Bodies.

5.3. The CERTALARM TAG shall similarly document procedures for scheme rules compliance audits for all Conformity Assessment Bodies prior to acceptance and during the period prior to obtaining accreditation to the CERTALARM Sector Scheme.

5.4. The plan shall be implemented in conjunction with the routine audits by the relevant Accreditation Body and the results made available to the relevant Accreditation Body through the participant.

5.5. Following audits of Certification Bodies, Test Laboratories and Inspection Bodies by Accreditation Bodies, copies of accreditation certificates and annexes shall be provided to the CERTALARM General Manager, who may additionally request copies of the full audit reports.

5.6. The CERTALARM TAG shall assess the results, anonymously, as described in clause 7; the General Manager shall implement its decisions.

5.7. A participant may be invited to a meeting with appropriate representatives of the TAG to resolve any disputes arising.

5.8. Where necessary, corrective action measures shall be applied, as described in Clause 8.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1. The identity of each participant will be confidential and known only to the CERTALARM General Manager and the minimum number of other persons necessary (example: member of TAG witnessing testing or inspection).

6.2. All information supplied to CERTALARM by a participant will be treated as confidential.

6.3. Confidentiality may be waived:
a) for accreditation or regulatory purposes;
b) by the initiative of the participant in discussions in order to facilitate performance improvement.

7. DATA ANALYSIS and RECORDS

7.1. Analysis of results will be carried out as quickly as practical after completion of the comparison test round by all participants. To that end, a target completion date will be agreed with each participant on setting the comparison exercise.

7.2. Should this target date not be met, the analysis shall go ahead, and the provisions of clause 8 applied to the participant(s) failing to meet the deadline.

7.3. Where a single test item is being tested sequentially, each participant shall receive an interim report, pending overall completion and full analysis of results.

7.4. The CERTALARM TAG shall analyse and review the results of the comparison tests for consistency as described by ISO/IEC Guide 43. Where relevant in order to adequately compare and assess the results, information shall be requested from participants as to how the specified procedure was applied in order to identify the reasons for variations between results from different participants.

7.5. Conclusions shall take into account all information available, and shall not assume that the majority is correct. To that end, all significant variations shall be investigated by an expert group (drawn from the CERTALARM TAG and augmented as appropriate) as to their likely cause before the conclusions are finalised.

7.6. A summary of the results shall be compiled and circulated to all participants in such a way that each can identify his own results, with others remaining anonymous.

7.7. Where deemed necessary, the CERTALARM General Manager will arrange to discuss the results with an individual participant and the relevant Accreditation Body with a view to appropriate corrective action or performance improvements being implemented (see clause 8).

7.8. In the event that serious irregularities are detected, an assessment shall be made as to the potential effect on products or services previously tested and certified under the CERTALARM Scheme, and appropriate action instituted. Additionally, the CERTALARM TAG may, at its discretion, recommend to the General Manager the imposition of an immediate suspension of the participant from work in the relevant field for the CERTALARM Scheme, pending satisfactory implementation of corrective measures.

7.9. Records of each comparison test round results shall be retained by CERTALARM for a minimum period of 5 years.

8. CORRECTIVE ACTION

8.1. Following full analysis, the CERTALARM TAG shall decide on corrective action necessary and convey this to the participant (via the General Manager).

8.2. Agreed corrective action should be implemented in accordance with a plan agreed by the CERTALARM TAG.

8.3. In the event that this is not achieved, the CERTALARM TAG shall review the failure with the participant, who may be suspended or restricted from work in connection with the CERTALARM scheme if the conclusions are unsatisfactory.

8.4. Any restriction or suspension applied will be detailed currently on the CERTALARM web site.

9. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO CERTIFICATION BODIES

9.1. All CERTALARM contracted certification bodies will be expected to take part in the comparison programme as part of their accreditation for the CERTALARM Sector scheme.

9.2. The CERTALARM TAG shall specify the basis for each round of comparisons, normally annually.

9.3. Compliance with CERTALARM Scheme Rules (Part 1) and in particular Annex D.1 shall be checked prior to Recognition and annually until fully accredited to the CERTALARM Sector Scheme. After this, the audit shall be conducted bi-annually according to an audit scheme specified by the CERTALARM TAG. This shall be arranged by the General Manager.

10. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO TEST LABORATORIES

10.1. All CERTALARM recognised test laboratories shall be expected to take part in the comparison test programme as part of their accreditation for the CERTALARM Sector scheme. Where certain tests are routinely sub-contracted, the comparison test shall be sub-contracted to the same laboratory.

10.2. The CERTALARM TAG shall specify the standards / evaluations / clauses to be used for each round of comparison tests, normally annually. These will be based on the “critical” tests from each standard.

NOTE: “Critical” tests for each standard will be defined by the CERTALARM TAG according to those most likely to identify differences between laboratory testing methods / results relevant to the functionality and reliability of the product

10.3. Test methods will be those defined in the standard(s) specified for the comparison test, taking into account any published comment on those standards that forms part of the CERTALARM Scheme. Where appropriate, the CERTALARM TAG may offer specific guidance on the application of these tests, but this will be kept to a minimum in order that there should be as little variation as possible from standard operating procedures.

10.4. CERTALARM shall arrange for the supply of suitable components for the comparison tests. Components may be purchased for this purpose, or donated by one or more manufacturers.

10.5. CERTALARM may supply multiple identical components to a number of participants simultaneously, or a single component supplied sequentially, as appropriate to the product and tests applicable.

NOTE: Where practical, the preference will be for a single component to be tested sequentially to guarantee a common basis for comparison of results.

10.6. The CERTALARM TAG will obtain assistance, where appropriate, from the manufacturer to ensure the correct configuration of the components to be used.

10.7. In addition to clause 7.1, the CERTALARM TAG shall take into account any corrosive element or other factor relevant to the component when setting the time limit for completion of the tests.

10.8. Compliance with scheme rules and in particular Annex D.1 shall be checked prior to Recognition and annually until fully accredited to the CERTALARM Sector Scheme according to an audit scheme specified by the CERTALARM TAG. This shall be arranged by the General Manager.

11. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO SERVICES INSPECTION BODIES

11.1. All CERTALARM recognised services inspection bodies will be expected to take part in the comparison programme as part of their accreditation for the CERTALARM Sector scheme.

11.2. The CERTALARM TAG shall specify the basis for each round of comparisons, normally annually

11.3. Compliance with scheme rules, and in particular Annex D.1 shall be checked prior to Recognition and annually until fully accredited to the CERTALARM Sector Scheme. After this, the audit shall be conducted bi-annually according to an audit scheme specified by the CERTALARM TAG. This shall be arranged by the General Manager.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

EA-03/04 Use of Proficiency Testing as a Tool for Accreditation in Testing