

Qatar

Overview

The Government is currently developing its standards regime to meet internationally and regionally-recognized norms and practices, such as the ISSO standards. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology, an independent organization under the supervision of the Minister of Business and Trade, is the standard-developing and conformity assessment body for Qatar. However, Qatari government ministries such as the National Health Authority (NHA), the Ministry of Energy and Industry and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture provide recommendations for standards. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology continually develops new standards and criteria for various items and merchandize.

Standards Organizations

The only standards organization in Qatar is the Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

Qatar has laboratories to test construction materials, food and calibration scales. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology is charged with the task of developing laboratories and facilities to test electrical equipment and supplies, toys and oil fabrication equipment as well as other items and merchandize. The Departments of Central Laboratories, and Quality and Standards, which are under the supervision of the General Organization for Standards and Metrology, are the primary testing facilities for Qatar. There are no conformity assessment bodies in Qatar.

Product Certification

Qatar applies product certification according to ISSO standards 22 and 28. Product certification takes place by way of a conformity certificate from the manufacturer, selfdeclaration or tests reported by accredited laboratories from exporting country.

Accreditation

There are no accreditation organizations in Qatar.

Publication of Technical Regulations

The name of the national gazette is the Government Official Gazette. Proposed regulations are currently not published but final regulations are published and are considered law once listed in the Official Gazette. The General Organization for Standards and Metrology has developed a website that lists all Qatari standards and allows for governments and the private sector to make comments on draft legislation for 60 days. More information can be found at: www.qs.org.qa

Labeling and Marking

Qatar enforces GCC shelf-life standards GS 150/1993, Part I and II, which combined affect 170 food products. The manufacturer's established shelf life is accepted for other food products. Production and expiry dates must be printed on the original label or container by the manufacturer. Dates cannot be added after the fact via a sticker. Products must arrive at destination with at least half the shelf-life duration remaining. The U.S. supplier should work closely with the importer to ensure compliance with local shelf-life requirements.

Food labels must include product and brand names, production and expiry dates, country of origin, name and address of the manufacturer, net weight in metric units, and a list of the ingredients in descending order of importance. All fats and oils used as ingredients must be specifically identified on the label. Labels for food must be in Arabic or Arabic/English. Arabic stickers are accepted.

Contacts

Qatar's primary point of contact for matters on standards is the following:

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Trade Agreements

Qatar is a strong supporter of regional integration and has ties with several Arab League member states. Qatar has signed several bilateral agreements to ease trade and investment restrictions with Arab countries in the Gulf and North Africa. Over the past ten years, Qatar has signed bilateral investment protection agreements with several countries, including Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Croatia, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran, South Korea, Morocco, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sudan, Switzerland and Turkey.

As a member of the GCC, Qatar is a signatory to the GCC Free Trade Agreement. This agreement provides duty free access to all goods produced in the GCC States, provided that the goods meet the content requirements (at least 40 percent value added within GCC factories, which are at least 50 percent owned by GCC entities). In January 2003, the GCC implemented a unified customs tariff to facilitate regional trade. The GCC aims to adopt a common currency.

Qatar has not entered into a bilateral investment or taxation treaty with the United States, although there is ongoing interest in exploring a U.S.-Qatar free trade agreement.