

Argentina

Overview

A 1994 decree created the legal framework (Decree 1474/94) for standards-related activities in Argentina.

As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Argentina signed the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), affirming its obligations relative to technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures. The Argentine Standardization Institute (*Instituto Argentino de Normalización* - IRAM) has signed the WTO TBT Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards. Responsibilities under the TBT agreement include the establishment of a national inquiry point to serve as a central location for information on standards-related issues, including proposed mandatory regulations. The Argentine inquiry point is in the Secretariat of Industry, Commerce and SMEs (see Information Sources below). The U.S. inquiry point is the [National Center for Standards and Certification Information \(NCSCI\)](#), located at National Institute of Standards and Technology (see Information Sources below).

Standards and Regulations in MERCOSUR

Argentina, as an active MERCOSUR member, participates in the development of MERCOSUR standards and regulations. The MERCOSUR Standards Association, AMN (previously known as *the Comité MERCOSUR de Normalización*) -- composed of the standards institutes of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay -- develops and harmonizes standards. The Executive Secretariat of the AMN is located in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Voluntary standards are developed in 16 technical committees and deal mostly with steel products, cement and concrete, and electrical safety. Several hundred standards are at different stages of preparation or in the work plan.

Regional technical regulations are developed and/or harmonized by the MERCOSUR governments in Sub Working Group 3 in the following fields: automotive, foods, metrology, safety issues for electrical products, toys, and pre-measured products. Separate working groups, such as those on telecommunications and health issues, also focus on mandatory technical requirements for their particular sectors. Approved MERCOSUR regulations are not automatically adopted in each country. To be applicable, harmonized MERCOSUR regulations must be adopted by each country. The four countries generally adopt all MERCOSUR regulations though at different speeds.

Agricultural and Health-related Products

Please note that agricultural and health-related products are subject to specific and different voluntary standards and mandatory technical regulations. Medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and foods are the purview of the National Administration of Drugs, Food and Medical Technology (*Administración Nacional de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Tecnología Médica* - ANMAT).

Standards Organizations

There are two private sector organizations that work under the National System for Standards, Quality and Certification. IRAM is the official national standards body for the Republic of Argentina. The Argentine Accreditation Organization (*Organismo Argentino de*

Accreditación - OAA) is the accreditation body. These are the only organizations that carry out standardization and accreditation in Argentina. As of January 2011 there are Mutual Recognition Agreements between major foreign certification organizations and IRAM. However, it is recommended that exporters check the current status of these agreements prior to initiating new business arrangements or significant shipments of goods that require IRAM certification.

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 Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Conformity Assessment

IRAM, created in 1935, is the only developer of national voluntary standards in Argentina. Reliance on international standards as a basis for developing national standards continues to be a strong trend in Argentina. While many IRAM standards are compatible with U.S. standards, many others are patterned after requirements of various European countries and may place U.S. products at a significant disadvantage.

IRAM is also a certification organization, both for products and systems. Its product certification mark, the "*Sello IRAM*" is widely recognized in the country as indicating conformity to an IRAM voluntary standard. See below for the mandatory safety mark. In Argentina, most standards are voluntary. The buyer and seller share responsibility in determining what product standard is applicable. Products conforming to U.S. standards may or may not be acceptable. Reflecting long-standing tradition and practice, products that meet European requirements are often preferred. This preference may be expressed in procurement specifications, in customary design and construction practices, or as market issues.

Given the growing importance of standards and conformity assessment in expanding U.S. exports, a standards expert is assigned to work in the U.S. Commercial Service office at the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia, with regional responsibilities for South American countries, including Argentina.

Product Certification

Mandatory Testing and Mandatory Product Certification

Regulated products must display an official safety "S" mark to show they conform to the regulations. However, as described above and due to implementation issues, it is difficult to state with certainty at this time the products that must be tested, certified, and marked as required by the resolutions.

Non-Mandatory Testing and Product Certification

There is no legal mandate to retest non-regulated products that have been approved in their country of origin. For non-regulated products, some U.S. trademarks and product certifications are well known and accepted in Argentina. As with standards, any certification that may be required for non-regulated sectors is a contractual matter to be decided between the buyer and the seller. However, it is important to be aware that market conditions and preferences may impose the use of particular standards, certification, or trademarks.

Traditionally, product certification in Argentina has been mostly voluntary with few active organizations including IRAM. However, this has changed due to the partial implementation of regulations that mandate product certification. A number of U.S. certification bodies are now active in Argentina, along with several multinationals and new local entities.

INTI, the National Institute of Industrial Technology (*Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Industrial*), is a government agency that participates in standards development and performs product testing and certification. Due to the continuing shortage of independent laboratories in Argentina, INTI is viewed as a prime testing and calibration laboratory for the country. INTI's position attracts interest and substantial technical support and cooperation from foreign countries, most notably Germany, Japan, and the U.K. These, and other countries such as France, regularly offer scholarships for long- and medium-term training courses abroad. Other Argentine private and public organizations also benefit from third country largesse.

To facilitate the acceptance of U.S. products in the Argentine market, agreements between U.S. and local certifiers and testing houses are encouraged. This could provide recognition of existing certifications. Also, there is no impediment for U.S. certification organizations to be established and accredited in Argentina.

Accreditation

Entities that engage in certification for regulated products must be accredited by the Argentine Accreditation Organization (*Organismo Argentino de Acreditación, OAA*) and recognized by the Government. Testing laboratories must similarly be accredited and recognized.

Organismo Argentino de Acreditación

Phone/Fax: (54-11) 4349-3962/63/64 Email: info@oaa.org.ar
<http://www.oaa.org.a>

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In 1998, the Argentine government embarked on a new path of issuing regulations mandating that certain products meet safety requirements. The trend has slowed down considerably and, generally, implementation schedules have been postponed. Low voltage electrical equipment was the first product category subjected to safety regulations and mandatory certification (Resolution 92/98). Regulations have also been issued for toys, shoes, gas appliances and products, construction steel, elevators, energy consumption and noise labeling of appliances, closures for dangerous products, and personal protective equipment. Since the end of 1999, efforts have been concentrated in implementation rather than in adding new categories of product to safety regulations. Full-phased implementation of most regulations is not following original schedules. Resolution 92/98 originally covered all low voltage electrical equipment, but subsequent modifications have excluded various categories of products. However, the vast majority of

electrical and electronic products in the consumer marketplace are still subject to this regulation. Evidence of compliance with the regulation is mandatory through product certification. Resolution 92/98 provided for a phased three-stage implementation, with different dates depending on the product. Phase 1 calls for a sworn declaration of conformity, phase 2 provides for a type-certification, and phase 3 requires full third-party certification with mark of conformity.

Labeling and Marking

Resolution 197/2004, published in the *Boletín Oficial* on January 7th, 2005 establishes the requirements for certification by mark (ISO 4), type (ISO 5), or batch (lot-ISO 7). Type and lot requirements will apply after June 28th, 2005, while mark stamps will be required starting January 7th, 2005. Manufacturers and importers of the products affected by these requirements (electric apparatus over 50 volts, toys, personal protection equipment, elevators, steel, lighters, and bicycles) can choose among the three-certification criteria (steel products can only be certified by mark or batch). Products certified by type or lot must bear a seal that includes the certification number. The latter must also consign batch number information.

Labeling requirements include safety information, voltage, fire safety, and child safety information. Canned and bottled food labeling requirements include ingredients, identification of manufacturer/importer, and manufacturing/expiration dates. Pharmaceuticals must indicate the name of the responsible technical director of the pharmaceutical laboratory, as well as the ingredients by weight/volume. On July 6, 2005, the Government revised Resolution 197 and passed a new Resolution (109) that incorporated the mandatory Certification Regime in force in compliance with safety requirements. To view the version in Spanish, please see: <http://www.mecon.gov.ar>.

Contacts

For information on Argentine and MERCOSUR standards, contact:

IRAM, *Instituto Argentino de Normalización* Email: iram@iram.org.ar
Contact: Enrique Romero, President <http://www.iram.com.ar/> Comments: Argentine Standardization Institute

AMN, *Asociación MERCOSUR de Normalización* Email: secretaria@amn.org.br
<http://www.amn.org.br/br/> Comments: MERCOSUR Standards Association

For information on the WTO-TBT inquiry point, contact:

Dirección Nacional de Comercio Interior, Secretaría de Comercio Interior
Ministerio de Economía y Producción Email: dinaci@mecon.gov.ar Contact: Fernando A. Carro, Acting Director

For medical products, contact:

ANMAT, *Administración Nacional de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Tecnología Médica* Email:
direccion@anmat.gov.ar Contact: Carlos Chiale, Director General <http://www.anmat.gov.ar/>