

Honduras

Overview

Standardization efforts began in 1998, upon establishment of the Inter-Institutional Standardization Commission of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (SIC). The Commission includes representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources & the Environment, Health, and Finance, as well as several other key organizations from the private sector. As of October 2006 (through executive decree 215-A-2006), standards-related duties and activities are the responsibility of the newly created National Standards Body (Organismo Nacional de Normalización, OHN) under the Science, Technology and Innovation Council (COHCIT), the technical secretariat of the National Quality Council (CNCA). The CNCA is under the umbrella of the National Competitiveness Commission, which is now part of the newly established Technical Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

The main objectives of the standards governmental body are to:

- a) Formulate and coordinate the execution of normalization and quality control programs adequate to country needs;
- b) Integrate technical committees for individual normalization projects; and
- c) Formulate new national standards projects.

In general, standards issues and related technical obstacles do not pose a major hurdle for U.S. exporters. At present, work is being done in connection to defining the limits of the procedures described in Executive Decree 215-A-2006, particularly regarding voluntary compliance terms, in order to allow a practical development of the national standardization program. Honduras currently has sixty-two (62) national standards, issued by the new National Standards Body, OHN. With CAFTA-DR implementation, signatories are expected to intensify their joint work in the field of standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment procedures with a view to facilitating regional trade.

Standards Organizations

The following sectors have been identified as some of the main productive areas for the potential development of standards in Honduras:

- Agro-industrial production
- Tourism
- Wood - Furniture
- Industrial Production

Honduras is also a subscriber member of the International Standards Organization (ISO) since January 2000. With CAFTA-DR implementation and other trade agreements, Honduran manufacturers are increasingly seeking international standards certification. The implementation of ISO certification for local companies is conducted by legally credited international standards institutions. There are 102 local companies currently certified under ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, and approximately 30 are in the process of obtaining 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: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus>

Conformity Assessment

Among the most relevant national testing and conformity assessment bodies are:

- Ministry of Industry and Trade

<http://www.sic.gob.hn>

- Consumer Protection and Metrology Division

<http://www.sic.gob.hn>

- National Plant and National Health Service (SENASA)

<http://www.senasa-sag.gob.hn>

- National Laboratory of Residues (LANAR);

- Quality Control Lab for Veterinary Products;

<http://www.sag.gob.hn>

- Ministry of Health

General Directorate of Sanitary and Environmental Regulation

Food Control Lab

<http://www.salud.gob.hn>

- Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment

CESCO (Pollution Control Research Center)

DECA (Environmental Control and Evaluation Directorate)

Mining Executive Directorate (DEFOMIN Laboratory)

<http://www.serna.gob.hn>

- Ministry of Finance

Customs and Tax Division

National Customs Laboratory

<http://www.dei.gob.hn>

- Official Laboratory of Honduran Chemical and Pharmaceutical Industry Association

- Other private laboratories such as Jordanlab, MQ, and the Honduran Foundation for Agricultural Research (FHIA).

Product Certification

With CAFTA-DR and other trade agreements, Honduran manufacturers are increasingly seeking international standards certification. Certification requirements apply to the importation of certain products. Certificates of free sale and of origin are required for food items. Importers must provide certifications that the products will not cause damage to humans, animals or the environment. Specific certifications are also required according to the type of product to be imported. Imports of animal and plant origin require a phyto or zoo sanitary certificate. As part of CAFTA-DR, Honduras and the U.S. recognize each other's inspection systems in the manufacturing and processing of animals and products of animal origin as equivalent. In the case of medical and pharmaceutical products which are not for free or over-the-counter sale, a Sanitary Registration is also required.

The certificate of Free Sale (CFS) is issued by the appropriate state-level health authorities or the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. The certificate is requested to register the processed food product with the SRD. For registration purposes, the CFS should be accompanied by a document that provides an endorsement of the signatures that appear on the CFS. This document can be any of the following: An apostille that certifies that the CFS has been signed by a notary public of the state of origin of the CFS or by an authentication of the CFS by the Honduran Consulate. In both cases, the apostille or authentication should be provided with an official translation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Honduras.

Accreditation

The "Oficina Hondureña de Acreditación (OHA)", which operates under the umbrella of the Technical Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (SEPLAN), is the official accreditation body in Honduras. Since 2005, OHA maintains a technical cooperation agreement with the Costa Rican Accreditation Entity (ECA). Additional information on OHA and ECA is available at:

<http://www.hondurascalidad.org/acreditacion.htm>

<http://www.eca.or.cr>

Publication of Technical Regulations

Final technical regulations are published in the local government newspaper "La Gaceta". Honduras' national gazette is available only through printed copies purchased from the National Graphic Arts Company, Tel. (504) 230-3026. New laws and regulations approved by the government's executive branch become effective on the date of publication.

Labeling and Marking

The content, weight and measurement of products sold in Honduras shall be expressed in officially recognized metric and decimal system units.

Products are required to provide the following label information in Spanish:

- Product definition/description
- Name of the product (the official name as noted on the U.S. Certificate of Free Sale)
- Physical characteristics, including ingredients (must be qualitative composition, translated literally from English)
- Net weight/volume
- List of ingredients and additives and the total percentage for each

- Name, address and telephone number of Honduran distributor/representative
- Sanitary License registration number from the Ministry of Health
- Expiration date

Imported sample-sized products must comply with labeling laws. Bulk-packed food products do not require labeling unless they will be sold at the retail level as an individual unit. Honduras has no requirements regarding nutritional labeling, and it uses the Codex Alimentarius as a guideline. Labels should not indicate that the product has therapeutic, healing, or any other attributes not normally associated with the product.

The declared net content must be expressed in International System (SI) units; additional net content declaration in other units is optional. Small variations in net content are permitted, but must not be excessive. Honduras does not require a specific container size for any products. Pharmaceutical products need to have active ingredients listed, and include a sell-by date. Cigarettes and alcoholic beverages must contain a warning label that complies with the IHADFA (Instituto Hondureño para la Prevención del Alcoholismo, Drogadicción y Farmacodependencia).

Pharmaceutical products and pesticides must be labeled in Spanish if possible. The Ministry of Public Health enforces product labeling requirements for food and pharmaceutical products, while the Ministry of Agriculture enforces labeling requirements for pesticides. Personal Hygiene, Homecare and Cosmetic Products do not require legal registry like pharmaceutical products, but, depending on the product, may require a registration process if requested by the Ministry of Health.

Trade Agreements

CAFTA-DR supplanted the earlier Caribbean Basin Initiative and later Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act trade benefits. CAFTA-DR liberalized bilateral trade between the United States and the region and also furthered integration efforts among the countries of Central America, removing barriers to trade and investment in the region by U.S. companies. CAFTA-DR requires countries to undertake needed reforms to alleviate systemic problems in such areas as customs administration; protection of intellectual property rights; services, investment, and financial services market access and protection; government procurement; sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) barriers; and other non-tariff barriers.

The final act of the Multilateral Commercial Negotiations of the Uruguay Round, which established the World Trade Organization (WTO), was signed by Honduras on April 15, 1995. Since 1961, Honduras has also been a member of the Central American Common Market (CACM), which includes Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Panama, although not a full member of the CACM, has participated in CACM activities. As of January 2009, the harmonized tariff level, as the common external tariff between CACM countries, was 94 percent of the entire customs duty schedule.

Members of the Northern Triangle CA-3 (Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador) signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with Mexico that went into effect in June 2001. Honduras has signed free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, Chile, and Taiwan. At the regional level, a free trade agreement went into effect with the Dominican Republic in December 2001. The Government of Honduras recently concluded FTA negotiations with Canada. An Association Agreement between Central America and the European Union is likely to enter into force in 2012.

Central America established a common external tariff schedule in 1998. Six countries signed a revised protocol for economic integration and macroeconomic coordination in October 1993. The integration protocol allows Central American countries to advance at varying rates toward more open trade. The "CA-3" has moved the most rapidly to eliminate trade barriers among themselves and is in the process of eliminating customs inspections at their common borders, relying instead on electronic documentation filed in advance.

Additional information on Honduras's bilateral and multilateral trade agreements is available at: http://www.sic.gob.hn/tratados_suscritos/

-Contact Information [Return to top](#)

National Standards Body

National Directorate for Competitiveness and Innovation
(Organismo Hondureño de Normalización/OHN)

Lic. Sandra Gómez, Coordinator

Apartado Postal No. 4458; Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Tel: (504) 2230-7000; 2228-6195; 2230-3045; Fax: (504) 2230-1899

E-mail: sgomez@seplan.gob.hn

<http://www.hondurascalidad.org>

National Accreditation Body

Oficina Hondureña de Acreditación (OHA)

National Directorate for Competitiveness and Innovation

Dra. Liza Madrid, Coordinator

Tel: (504) 2230-7000; 2228-6195; 2230-3045; Fax: (504) 2230-1899

E-mail: lmadrid@seplan.gob.hn

<http://www.hondurascalidad.org>

National Metrology Institute

Centro Hondureño de Metrología (CEHM)

National Directorate for Competitiveness and Innovation

Ing. Efraín Paz, Coordinator

Tel: (504) 2230-7000 ; 2228-6195; 2230-3045; Fax: (504) 2230-1899

E-mail: epaz@seplan.gob.hn

<http://www.hondurascalidad.org>

National Quality System

National Directorate for Competitiveness and Innovation CNCA – Technical Secretariat

Ing. Cristina Rodríguez, Director

Apartado Postal No. 4458

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Tel: (504) 2230-7000; 2228-6195; 2230-3045; Fax: (504) 2230-1899

E-mail: crodriguez@seplan.gob.hn

<http://www.hondurascalidad.org>

Post Standards Contact

U.S. Embassy - U.S. Commercial Service

Rossana Lobo

Senior Commercial Specialist

Avenida La Paz

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Tel: (504) 2236-9320; Fax: (504) 238-2888

E-mail: Rossana.Lobo@trade.gov

<http://www.export.gov/honduras>

Web Resources

- Honduran Ministry of Industry & Trade: <http://www.sic.gob.hn>
- National Directorate for Competitiveness & Innovation: <http://www.seplan.gob.hn>
- National Quality System: <http://www.hondurascalidad.org>
- Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration <http://www.sieca.org.gt>
- Honduran Private Enterprise Council: <http://www.cohep.com>
- Chamber of Commerce of Tegucigalpa: www.ccit.hn
- Chamber of Commerce of Cortés: www.ccichonduras.org
- Honduran Customs Office: <http://www.dei.gob.hn>
- U.S. Department of Commerce: <http://www.export.gov/FTA/cafta-dr>
- USDOC Bureau of Industry & Security: <http://www.bis.gov>
- Foreign Agricultural Service: <http://www.fas.usda.gov>
- National Institute of Standards & Technology: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus>