Developing the Nonrespiratory Personal Protective Equipment Conformity Assessment Framework for the Nation
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Abstract
Conformity Assessment (CA) is the “demonstration that specified requirements relating to a product, process, system, person, or body are fulfilled” ISO/IEC 17000 [2]. The level of independence necessary in a CA process may be determined by examining perceived risk (Figure 2).

Types of Conformity Assessment [3]
- SDoC ISO/IEC 17050
  - Testing ISO/IEC 17025
  - Inspection ISO/IEC 17020
  - Certification ISO/IEC Guide 65
  - Registration ISO/IEC 17021
- Accreditation ISO/IEC 17011

Figure 2. Perceived risk versus risk [4]

Methods
- NIOSH developed a strategy and timeline to assess certification mechanisms (Figure 3)
- NIOSH Engaged the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to better define the implications of the 2008 recommendation to assess various certification mechanisms [5]
- NIOSH opened a docket to solicit comments on the CA strategy [6]

Background
The 2008 NA report recognized that NIOSH’s historical role in providing certification of respirators (Figure 1) has had a significant positive impact on the quality of respirators available in the workplace with consequent reductions in deaths and serious injuries.

Next steps
- NIOSH will develop a CA framework with input from partners (Figure 4)
- Framework will serve as the basis for CA standard and/or NIOSH audit/oversight approach

Results
  - Develop and Implement Risk-Based Conformity Assessment Processes for Non-Respirator PPT
  - Enhance Research, Standards Development, and Communication
  - Establish a PPT and Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance System

- NIOSH developed core conformity assessment questions to be addressed
  - What approach will best balance the private and public sector interests in protecting the health and safety of the American Worker?
  - What implementation mechanisms and authorities must be used, enhanced, or developed to ensure effective national CA implementation, coordination, and compliance?
  - Using a cost/benefit approach, what will the marketplace, particularly PPE purchasers and end users, be realistically willing and able to support?
  - What level of CA is necessary under various circumstances?

Figure 3. Timeline for conducting assessment of various certification mechanisms and their potential applicability to non-respiratory PPT

Stakeholders
All workers who wear personal protective equipment (PPE)

Partners
- CPWR
- NIST
- NIOSH
- OSHA

References

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