Misuse of third party marks of conformity

Table of contents

Introduction

This brochure provides some examples of misuse of third-party marks of conformity, which is implied when requirements of ISO/IEC 17030 are not met. Misuse includes inappropriate use by authorized or unauthorized issuers and/or users, and any use by unauthorized persons or entities.

ISO/IEC 17030:2021 is an international standard that provides general requirements for third-party marks of conformity, including their issue and use. During revision of ISO/IEC 17030, ISO/IEC guide 23:1982 and ISO guide 27:1983 were taken into account and have been withdrawn following the publication of this standard.

ISO/IEC 17030 standard covers third-party marks of conformity issued and used in different forms and various media including digital representation employing electronically stored and displayed marks, machine readable code, public ledger technology, distributed ledger technology (e.g., blockchain) or other electronic means. It helps issuers and users of third-party marks of conformity to consistently and effectively apply third-party marks of conformity.

ISO/IEC 17030 applies to third-party marks where the scheme includes ongoing monitoring of conformity on a regular basis. It does not include conformity assessment which do not comprise ongoing monitoring such as validation and verification.

Laboratories performing tests and calibrations under ISO/IEC 17025 standard and proficient testing programs operating under ISO/IEC 17043 do not issue laboratory and proficiency testing marks or logo and hence misuse of such marks are not covered in this brochure. In addition to requirements stipulated in ISO/IEC 17030, conformity assessment schemes for product, process, services, management systems, inspection and testing can have other requirements for third-party marks of conformity.

Specifically, the brochure covers examples of misuse for certification marks issued by certification bodies for products, including services and processes (PC marks), management systems (MSC marks) and personnel (PeC Marks), and accreditation marks issued to laboratories (laboratory accreditation marks), inspection bodies (IB accreditation mark), proficiency testing providers (PTP accreditation mark), certification body accreditation marks, etc.

Note: It is important to utilize the following definition of user as "*person who interacts with the product, service or environment*"

Management system certification marks (MSC Mark)

Certification of a management system, such as the environmental management system, quality management system or information security management system of an organization, is one means of providing assurance that the organization has implemented a system for the management of the relevant aspects of its activities, products and services, in line with the organization's policy and the requirements of the respective international management system standard. ISO/IEC 17021-1 *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems* is the standard that specifies requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems including requirements for reference to certification and use of marks.

Examples of misuse of management systems certification marks.

1.1 Referring to MSC Marks (no matter where and how) for non-certified management system:

> **e.g.,** a restaurant refers to the certification mark for ISO 22000 standard, whilst its management system is not certified to this standard.

1.2 Continuing to refer to MSC Marks after expiration of respective certificates:

> **e.g.,** an internet provider keeps referring to ISO/IEC 27001 certification mark in 2020, while the respective certificate expired in 2019.

1.3 Referring to MSC Marks in a vague manner, so that the reader or user cannot determine what standard or scope has been certified:

> **e.g.,** a hotel refers vaguely to the certification marks for several management system standards, whilst its management system is certified only to ISO 45001.

1.4 Referring to wrong MSC Mark Owner/issuer:

> **e.g.,** a cement producer refers to the certification mark of Certification Body (CB) Alpha, whilst its management system is certified by CB Beta.

1.5 Referring to MSC Marks in areas outside certified scope:

> **e.g.,** a cement producer refers to the certification mark for the scope of "production of white and grey cements", whilst its management system is certified only in the scope of "production of white cement".

> **e.g.,** a cement producer claims to be certified for manufacturing cement at site A and B, yet scope of certification only applies to site A.

1.6 Referring to MSC Marks on a product which may mislead the customer to believe that the product is certified:

> **e.g.:** A beverage producer refers to the certification mark for ISO 22000 standard on bottles it delivers to the markets.

1.7 Referring to MSC Marks on the product package which may mislead the user to believe that the conformity of products inside the package is certified:

> **e.g.:** a safety shoes producer refers to ISO 45001 on a safety shoes package.

1.8 Referring to MSC Marks on service reports issued to clients without proper clarification which may mislead the user to believe that the service or the result is certified or approved by mark owner/issuer:

> **e.g.,** a mobile repair shop refers to MSC Marks on the repair service report/bills issued by the repair shop to its customer.

1.9 Referring to MSC Marks on knowledge assessment reports issued to clients:

> **e.g.,** a university/training center certified to ISO 9001, refers to MSC mark on students' final result reports issued to its clients (this misleads the students as they could interpret it to mean that they are certified according to ISO 9001, while some other could interpret that the service they received was in conformity to ISO 9001).

1.10 Referring to MSC Mark on outgoing documents without proper clarification which may mislead the user to believe that this mark is a product/service/process conformity mark:

> **e.g.:** reports/letters communicated to customers or other interested parties).

1.11 Continuing to refer to MSC Marks after the standard certified to has become obsolete:

> **e.g.,** a manufacturer keeps referring to ISO 9001:2008 Conformity assessment mark after the expiration of the transition period to the revised standard.

Product certification marks (PC mark)

Certification of products, processes or services is a means of providing assurance that they comply with specified requirements in standards and other normative documents. ISO/IEC 17065 *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services* contains requirements for the competence, consistent operation and impartiality of product, process and service certification bodies.

SECTIONS 2.1. TO 2.6
Examples of misuse of product certification marks.

2.1 Using or referring to PC marks (no matter where and how) for non-certified products:

> **e.g.:** A stationary producer prints PC marks on all its products, while "pencil" is the only certified product (not the pens or other products).

2.2 Continuing to use or referring to PC marks after expiration of respective certificates:

> **e.g.:** a glass producer continues to use PC mark or referring to ISO XXX (glass standard) conformity on its products and documents in 2020, while the respective product certificate expired in 2019.

2.3 Using or referring to PC marks in a vague manner, so that the user cannot determine which standard the product has been certified against:

e.g.: a car battery producer claims to meet product standards, while that product is only certified to INSO XXX (Iran national standard for battery).

e.g.: The product certification mark is used on the top page at the manufacturer's website in a way that may mislead the user to believe that all products are certified, while only some products have been certified

2.4 Using or referring to wrong PC mark issuer:

e.g.: a lamp producer gets its product certified by a product certification body (Alpha) but puts another product certification body (CB) name and mark on its product (Beta) due to market pull for CB Beta brand.

e.g.: on the product label, the mark of the third-party certification body is displayed near the mark issued by the import company so that the certification body is mistaken to be the import company.

2.5 Using or referring to PC marks in areas outside certified scope:

e.g.: using or referring to a PC mark and stating/implying that the product is not only in conformity with safety standards, but also environmental standards, while the product has been certified for safety standards only (not environmental ones).

2.6 Using or referring to PC marks on service reports issued to clients without proper clarification which may mislead the user to believe that the service or the result is approved by mark owner/issuer:

e.g.: TV producer which has its TV certified to ISO XXX TV Standard, uses or refers to that PC mark on its after sales service reports/bills issued to its customer (this will mislead the customer to believe that the service is certified).

Certification of persons marks (PeC)

Certification of persons is one means of providing assurance that the certified person meets the requirements of the certification scheme. ISO/IEC 17024 *Conformity assessment — General requirements for bodies operating certification of persons* contains principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons.

SECTIONS 3.1. TO 3.5
Examples of misuse of persons certification marks

3.1 Using or referring to PeC Marks (no matter where and how) for non-certified profession:

> **e.g.:** An auditor uses a welding expert PeC Marks on his/her visiting card, while the profession of auditor is the only certified profession (not welding expert).

3.2 Continuing to use or refer to PeC Marks after expiration of respective certificates:

> **e.g.:** An auditor is still using PeC Mark on his visiting card in 2020, while the respective certificate of persons (in this case auditor certification) expired in 2019.

3.3 Using or referring to PeC Marks in a vague manner, so that the user cannot determine for what standard or normative document that person has been certified:

> **e.g.:** an auditor claims to be certified to audit ISO 9001 standard, so that it is not clear if he/she is certified to audit to the current version of the standard, e.g., ISO 9001:2015 or the previous version ISO 9001:2008.

3.4 Using or referring to wrong PeC Mark Owner/issuer:

> **e.g.:** a welding expert claims to be certified by person certification body (CB) Alpha, while being certified by CB Beta (due to market pull for CB Beta brand).

3.5 Using or referring to PeC Marks in areas outside certified scope:

> **e.g.:** an auditor claims to be certified for the scope of "Quality Management systems", while the certified scope is "Quality Management systems in IAF sector code 28".

Accreditation marks

ISO/IEC 17011 *Conformity assessment — Requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies* specifies requirements for the competence, consistent operation and impartiality of accreditation bodies assessing and accrediting conformity assessment bodies. Activities covered by accreditation include but are not limited to testing, calibration, inspection, certification of management systems, persons, products, processes and services, provision of proficiency testing, production of reference materials, validation and verification.

SECTIONS 4.1. TO 4.5
Examples of misuse of accreditation marks

4.1   IAF-MLA and ILAC-MRA marks

For conformity assessment bodies accredited by accreditation bodies that are signatory of the International Accreditation Forum MultiLateral Recognition Arrangements (IAF-MLA) or the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC-MRA), using the IAF-MLA and the ILAC-MRA marks alone without the accreditation body symbol/mark.

> **e.g.:** an accredited certification body uses the IAF-MLA mark on certificates that it issues to its clients or other permissible media, without the accreditation body symbol/mark as guided by the accreditation body requirements.

e.g.: an accredited laboratory uses the ILAC-MRA mark on certificates that it issues to its clients or other permissible media, without the accreditation body mark, as guided by the accreditation body requirements.

4.2   Accreditation body symbol (mark)

For conformity assessment bodies accredited by accreditation bodies that are signatory of the IAF-MLA or the ILAC-MRA, using the accreditation symbol (mark) alone without its conformity assessment body third-party mark.

e.g.: an accredited certification body uses the accreditation symbol (mark) on certificates that it issues to its clients or other permissible media, without its conformity assessment mark, as guided by the accreditation body requirements.

4.3   Management system accreditation mark

Using or referring to MSC Marks alongside management systems certification accreditation body mark (MSCAB Mark) of the relevant accreditation body in areas outside the accredited scope of the relevant certification body:

e.g.: A certification body (CB) has been accredited to offer accredited food safety certification for fruit juice drinks (technical area A only). A certified fruit juices manufacturer who also produces dairy products (technical area B) uses the CB's management systems certification MS mark and accreditation mark when advertising its company's products yet the dairy products though certified are not yet accredited by the accreditation body for technical area B.

4.3.1 Using or referring to accreditation body (AB) marks by a certification body (CB) which is not accredited at all.

e.g.: A Management Systems CB that has not been accredited by an AB, uses/prints that AB's logo on ISO 9001 certificates that it issues (grants to its clients).

e.g.: Product CB that has not been accredited by an AB, uses/prints that AB's logo on Product Certification documents such as certificates that it issues (grants to its clients).

e.g.: Personnel CB that has not been accredited by an AB, uses/prints that AB's logo on Personnel Certification documents such as certificates and or personnel certification cards that it issues (to its clients).

4.3.2 Using or referring to accreditation body (AB) marks in "disciplines" other than that which it has been accredited for;

e.g.: A Management Systems Certification body has been accredited to offer food safety certification based on ISO 22000 only, but it uses/prints AB logo on ISO 9001 Quality management systems certificates issued to its clients as well.

e.g.: A Product Certification Body has been accredited to offer product certification on Water valves only, but it uses/prints AB logo on Oil Valves certificates as well (granted to its clients).

e.g.: A Persons CB has been accredited to issue competency certification for welders only, but it uses/prints AB logo on competency certificates it issues for Non-Destructive Inspectors as well (granted to its clients).

4.3.3 Using or referring to accreditation body (AB) marks in "technical areas" other than those it has been accredited for.

e.g.: A Management Systems Certification body has been accredited to offer food safety certification based on ISO 22000 for technical area (food chain category) A (for Animal Farming) only, but it also uses/prints accreditation body logo on ISO 22000 certificates issued on Technical area (food chain category) B for (Plant Farming), granted to its clients.

4.3.4 Using or referring to accreditation body (AB) marks by unauthorized entities.

e.g.: A shoe producer uses an AB mark on its website or marketing material, while it is not certified by any CB.

e.g.: An individual uses an AB mark on its website, social network page or business card.

4.3.5 Using or referring to wrong accreditation mark owner/issuer

e.g.: an accredited inspection body claims to be accredited by accreditation body (AB) Alpha, while being accredited by AB Beta (due to market pull for AB Beta brand)

4.4 Laboratory accreditation marks (LA mark)

4.4.1 Using or referring to LA marks (no matter where and how) for non-accredited methods:

e.g.: a laboratory is accredited for "oil poor point" testing only, but claims to be accredited to perform all tests on chemicals such as "flash point", thereby including the flash point test results on the same certificate as the accredited parameters without any means of differentiation between accredited parameters and unaccredited parameters on the test report/ test certificate.

4.4.2 Continuing to use or refer to LA marks after expiration of respective accreditation certificates:

e.g.: using or referring to ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation mark in 2020, while the respective accreditation certificate expired in 2019.

4.4.3 Using or referring to LA marks in a vague manner, so that the user cannot determine what standard or scope has been accredited:

e.g: A medical laboratory claims to be accredited to ISO 15189 to perform "medical tests", while it is only accredited for "haematology blood tests " and not other medical tests.

4.4.4 Using or referring to wrong LA mark owner/issuer:

e.g.: A laboratory claims to be accredited by accreditation body (AB) alpha, while being accredited by AB Beta (due to market pull for AB Beta brand).

4.4.5 Using or referring to LA marks in areas outside accredited scope:

e.g.: A laboratory in concrete testing industry uses LA mark on a test report issued for XRF test, while this laboratory's accredited scope only includes "compressive strength test", (the accredited scope does not include "XRF" testing).

4.4.6 Using or referring to LA marks on a product (this misleads the customer to believe that the products is accredited):

e.g. 1: A beverage producer sends a beverage sample to an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited food testing laboratory and the test report indicates conformity of the sample to the respective product standard. Then the beverage producer uses the Laboratory accreditation mark on the beverage bottle and label.

e.g. 2: A beverage producer has a laboratory (as an internal department) and gets the laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 by an accreditation body. Then the beverage producer uses the LA marks on the beverage bottle and label.

4.4.7 Using or referring to LA marks on service reports issued to clients which may mislead the user to believe that the service is accredited:

e.g.: A mobile network operator has a laboratory (as an internal department) and gets the laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 by an accreditation body. Then the mobile network operator start using or referring to LA marks on the service report/bill issued to its customer;

e.g.: A mobile network operator has a laboratory (as an internal department) and gets the laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 by an accreditation body. Upon training its laboratory analysts, the mobile operator uses the Laboratory Accreditation mark on training certificates issued to participants.

4.4.8 Using or referring to LA mark on outgoing documents without proper clarification which may mislead the user to believe that this mark is a product/service/process conformity assessment mark:

e.g.: A hospital has a laboratory (as an internal department) and gets the laboratory accredited to ISO 15189 by an accreditation body. Then the hospital starts using or referring to LA marks on reports/letters communicated to customers or other interested parties (which may mislead the reader to believe that the hospital healthcare services are accredited).

4.5 Proficiency testing accreditation marks

4.5.1 Using or referring to PT marks (no matter where and how) for non-accredited proficiency testing:

e.g.: a PT provider is accredited for PT in "water tests" only but claims to be accredited to provide PT in all schemes and standards (e.g. oil tests).

4.5.2 Using or referring to PT marks after expiration of respective accreditation certificates:

e.g.: using or referring to ISO/IEC 17043 conformity mark in 2020, while the respective accreditation certificate expired in 2019.

4.5.3 Using or referring to PT marks in a vague manner, so that the user cannot determine the scope of accreditation:

e.g.: a PT Provider is accredited for PT service in "water tests" only, but it does not give any clarification on this (this misleads the reader/user regarding the scope that is accredited).

4.5.4 Using or referring to PT marks in areas outside accredited scope:

e.g.: a laboratory in concrete industry participates in a PT Program and the PT report shows their Z Score is very good (e.g. +0.2). From that date on the lab starts using PT Mark on its test reports issued to its clients (this misleads the user of test report to believe that the test results are approved by the PT Provider).

4.5.5   Using or referring to PT marks on a product (this misleads the customer to believe that the product is certified):

e.g. 1: A steel cable producer has a laboratory (as an internal department) and participates in a PT program and gets a good result in it (e.g., Z score is 0.1). Then the steel producer starts using or referring to PT Marks on the cable.

4.5.6   Using or referring to PT marks on the product package which may mislead the user to believe that the product inside the package is certified:

e.g.: a cable producer has a laboratory (as an internal department) and participates in a PT program and gets a good result in it (Z score is -0.2). Then the cable producer starts using or referring to PT Marks on the cable packages.

4.5.7   Using or referring to PT Marks on service reports issued to clients which may mislead the user to believe that the service is certified or approved by the mark owner/issuer:

e.g.: a laboratory in the concrete industry participates in a PT Program and the PT report shows their Z score is very good (e.g. +0.2). From that date on the laboratory starts using PT Mark on its test reports issued to its clients (this misleads the user of test report to believe that the test results are approved by the PT Provider)

4.5.8 Using or referring to PT Mark on outgoing documents without proper clarification which may mislead the reader/user to believe that this mark is a product/service/process conformity assessment mark:

e.g.: a hospital has a laboratory (as an internal department) and the laboratory participates in a central/national PT program organized by health ministry. The PT result shows that this laboratory is doing very good (Z score is 0.15). Then the hospital starts using or referring to PT Marks on reports/letters communicated to customers or other interested parties (which may mislead the reader to believe that the hospital healthcare services are accredited by the PT provider).

Further guidance on use of IAF MLA and ILAC MRA Marks is available on the **www.iaf.nu** and **www.ilac.org**.

About **ISO**

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 167* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

ISO has published more than 24 100* International Standards and related documents covering almost every industry, from technology to food safety, to agriculture and healthcare.

For more information, please visit **www.iso.org**

*February 2022

International Organization for Standardization

ISO Central Secretariat
Ch. de Blandonnet 8
Case Postale 401
CH – 1214 Vernier, Geneva
Switzerland

iso.org