Quick Guide to Brand Certification and CCS 3.0

Introduction

The **Content Claim Standard (CCS)** is the foundation of all Textile Exchange standards. It is a chain of custody standard that provides companies with a tool to verify that one or more specific input materials are in a final product. Certification to the CCS verifies the chain of custody principles are followed in each stage of production.

The Content Claim Standard was recently revised, and the CCS 3.0 launched in July of 2021. Click here for the press release.

One of the key updates to the revised CCS is the adjustment of the scope of chain of custody. In the new CCS 3.0, **brands are required to be certified by April 1, 2023 in order to make product-related claims.** Product-related claims may only be made if chain of custody is in place up to the brand, regardless of the brand's distribution model. Read on to learn about additional value for brands who are certified.

Document Links

- CCS-101 Content Claim Standard (CCS)
- CCS-201 Content Claim Standard (CCS) User Manual
- TE-405 Quick Guide to Product Labeling and CCS 3.0
- TE-301 Standards Claims Policy
- TE-302 Standards Logo Use Specifications

Important Definitions

Refer to *TE-101 Terms and Definitions for Textile Exchange Standards and Related Documents* for definitions of terms used within CCS 3.0. Key definitions are included below.

Associated Subcontractor: A subcontractor who is not certified independently from the contracting organization and is instead audited as part of the contracting organization's audit.

Brand: An organization that controls the design, development, and purchase of final products for sale under their own name or private label. Brands may sell to wholesalers, retailers or directly to consumers. This does not include organizations who sell a branded intermediate product for use in further processing steps.

Distributor: A site which takes physical possession of claimed material, but which is not a processor and does not transform products, including any (re)packaging which affects labeling or identification of materials (e.g., bagging of bulk down or applying a logo to finished products).

Retailer: An organization which sells products to individual consumers. Includes both physical stores and online sales, and may or may not also be the brand. The definition of retailer includes distribution centers which are controlled by the retailer.

Trader: A site which takes legal ownership but not physical possession of claimed material.

Brand Certification Details

Timeline
We typically estimate 6-8 weeks from the time of the application to the initial audit. Due to the increase in demand for certification, we have seen longer timelines and recommend getting in touch early to build a relationship with a certification body.

Audits
Remote audits are possible for brand-level certification. No on-site Distribution Center audits are required for brands in the CCS 3.0. Internal Control Systems will be audited to the key elements of the CCS 3.0 including product identification, product segregation, and volume reconciliation.

Cost
Certification Bodies set the cost of certification depending on a number of factors. We recommend getting in touch with multiple certification bodies to find the best quote. Click here for a full list of licensed certification bodies.

Benefits of Brand Certification

Certified brands with a full chain of custody may make product-related claims, per Section B3 of TE-301 Standards Claims Policy. The single license number from the brand's scope certificate will be used across all certified product claims; these claims may be passed onto retailers without needing to issue an outgoing transaction certificate. Only certified organizations (including brands and retailers) will have access to new Textile Exchange tools, including Trackit.