

What is Certification?

Certification is a two-step process designed to promote public health and environmental protection. First, a manufacturer demonstrates that its product(s), when independently tested by an accredited third-party certification organization, performs in accordance with recognized standards. Second, the manufacturer demonstrates through periodic reevaluation and unannounced audits of the manufacturing facility, that the product continues to meet the requirements of certification. Products meeting these criteria are authorized to claim certification and to bear a mark of certification. With regard to Onsite Wastewater Treatment, both the public health and the environment are at risk with products that do not perform adequately. Certification ensures that performance has been demonstrated independently, to a recognized, comprehensive standard, providing confidence in the quality and reliability of the product. This is documented through a varied battery of tests and criteria, as prescribed under ANSI/NSF Standard 40, which is the standard regulators, designers, installers, and owners rely upon to have confidence that the treatment device they use will perform as claimed.

ANSI/NSF Standard 40 encompasses several aspects, all of which are important to assure public health and environmental protection. First and foremost is a demonstration that the product produces a high quality, treated effluent to quality standards commonly recognized by state and local health departments. This performance is documented through a six-month trial during which the devices are operated at 100 percent capacity and stressed to simulate actual use conditions. No maintenance is allowed during this six-month period.

The product must also meet requirements for structural integrity, leakage, noise, electrical components, access ports, and alarms. Further, every product must come with a two-year warranty that includes at least four service visits of every installation. Finally, product literature must be complete, accurate, and provide information related to installation, operation, maintenance, troubleshooting, and repair.

Manufacturers and distributors are audited annually to ensure that the certified systems and installations conform with the approval conditions and that service providers maintain complete and accurate records. These audits are both comprehensive and unannounced.

How Certification Works

ANSI/NSF Standard 40 is a “consensus standard,” meaning that many divergent parties participated in its development and adoption. Standard 40 was developed by a group of about 30, who equally represented industry, regulators, and users. This group debated and eventually agreed upon a standard that NSF International publishes. Once adopted, the standard becomes an American National Standard, thus the name ANSI/NSF Standard 40. The scope of Standard 40 encompasses all residential treatment technologies.

As a companion document to the product standard, NSF International promulgates the certification policies to administer and enforce initial and long-term compliance with Standard 40. These policies specify how NSF International and manufacturers will fulfill their respective roles and responsibilities.

Ongoing committees comprised of manufacturers and interested parties provide a check and balance to ensure the letter and spirit of Standard 40 are being met by all who administer, enforce, or rely upon the standard. These committees meet annually to review and discuss issues. In addition, NSF International maintains a network of inspectors who receive and respond to complaints. Integral to this system is a requirement that manufacturers investigate all complaints, report their findings, and detail the actions they took to resolve the complaint.

Charter Member Companies

The following companies are charter members of the American Decentralized Wastewater Association and support the sole use of certified products. Each sells products certified under ANSI/NSF Standard 40, abides by the policies of NSF International, and has agreed to abide by a Code of Ethics that recognizes their responsibilities to the customers they serve, the public they protect, and the environment of which they are stewards.

ADWA members believe certification is critical and each abide by all of the rules and regulations associated with the certification process. To maintain the high level of public health and environmental protection we've come to expect, always seek out these ADWA Members for all of your Onsite Wastewater Treatment needs:

Bio-Microbics, Inc.
Consolidated Treatment Systems, Inc.
Pentair Incorporated
Norweco, Inc.

*American Decentralized
Wastewater Association
918 Congress Avenue
Suite 200
Austin, TX 78701
1-800-993-5002
www.adwwa.org*

ADWA

The American Decentralized Wastewater Association was developed to nurture the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Industry by promoting rules, standards, training, and related activities consistent with contemporary public health and environmental protection standards, engineering practices, and an open and fair market for new technologies.

AMERICAN DECENTRALIZED
WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION

What Sets “Certified” Apart From “Verified” and “Documented”?

The word “certification” is becoming increasingly confused with other activities that claim to be sufficient for product approval and acceptance. These other programs commonly use the terms “documented,” “tested,” “validated,” or “verified.” Promoters are careful to avoid the word certified. Certified products are the only products required to undergo testing to an American National Standard, by an accredited certifier, and be contractually bound to produce every certified product in accordance with a tested and approved design, as demonstrated through manufacturing and field audits. “Verification” is an alternate process to demonstrate product effectiveness. While verification may include testing in accordance with a specific protocol, verification includes neither long-term performance review nor ongoing auditing. Neither verification nor documentation are appropriate alternatives for certification.

The ADWA believes certification is the only appropriate method for the Onsite Wastewater Treatment industry. Only certification achieves all of the important policy objectives, including:

- Certified products must be independently tested and comply with strict pass/fail criteria before becoming certified.
- Certified products are manufactured to consistent standards of quality, as demonstrated through unannounced, annual audits.
- Certified products are independently tested under standard conditions using a specified protocol that allows for “apples-to-apples” comparisons and prevents deceptive practices in testing and data reporting.
- Certified products are subject to follow-up testing.
- Certified products must undergo review before any modifications can be made, ensuring continued performance and compliance.
- Other programs provide none of these safeguards.

NSF International

NSF, a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, is the world leader in standards development, product certification, education, and risk-management for public health and safety. For more than 58 years, NSF has been committed to public health, safety, and protection of the environment. While focusing on food, water, indoor air, and the environment, NSF develops national standards, provides learning opportunities through its Center for Public Health Education, and provides third-party conformity assessment services while representing the interests of all stakeholders. The primary stakeholder groups include industry, the regulatory community, and the public at large.

NSF is widely recognized for its scientific and technical expertise in the health and environmental sciences. Its professional staff includes engineers, chemists, toxicologists, and environmental health professionals with broad experience both in public and private organizations.

NSF has earned the Collaborating Center designations by the World Health Organization (WHO) both for Food Safety and for Drinking Water Safety and Treatment.

Serving manufacturers operating in more than 88 countries, NSF was founded in 1944 and is headquartered in Ann Arbor, MI USA. The NSF Mark is recognized for its value in international trade around the world and is respected by regulatory agencies at the local, state, and federal levels.

For further information about
ANSI/NSF Standard 40 Certification:

NSF International
789 Dixboro Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
1-800-NSF Mark
www.nsf.org

Role of ADWA

The American Decentralized Wastewater Association (ADWA) is committed to a professional Onsite Wastewater Treatment industry. To this end, the ADWA and its member companies participate in a variety of activities, all of which are intended to strengthen the certification and related enforcement processes. ADWA members:

- Promote the development and use of a national performance-based model code as it relates to Onsite Wastewater Treatment.
- Establish and maintain consistent testing protocols, standards, requirements, and limitations for technologies claiming to provide comparable levels of performance.
- Monitor Onsite Wastewater Treatment, laws, codes, guidelines, training material, and technical advisory boards to ensure that certified product manufacturers and technologies are given proper consideration.
- Promote environmental protection by establishing health and safety standards for Onsite Wastewater Treatment technologies.
- Develop and disseminate training and education material related to Onsite Wastewater Treatment.
- Interact with environmental, health, and regulatory agencies to promote the industry and act as a resource for advancing decentralized wastewater technology.
- Promote certified product research and support funding for certified product activities.
- Conduct routine meetings with policy makers and elected officials to ensure that the goals of the industry and ADWA are met.
- Coordinate the efforts and experience of installers, designers, regulators, and owners for technical and policy issues.
- Act as the voice for the industry and the technology.

How you can help...

Owners, installers, designers, regulators, and the public have greater input than they appreciate in protecting public health and the environment. It is through your action that public health and sanitary codes are developed, administered, and enforced. Your participation will ensure appropriate response on the part of those responsible for enforcing these codes. Demanding certified products—and accepting nothing less—goes far to protect our health and our environment. Here are ways you can participate:

- If you are an owner...request by brand name only certified products for your property.
- If you are an installer...purchase only certified products for your installations.
- If you are a designer...specify only certified products for your projects.
- If you are a regulator...enforce code requirements mandating use of certified products for all sites.
- If you are an industry leader...who has the ability to shape the direction of Onsite Wastewater Treatment systems, approach your responsibility with a sense of fairness to all technologies. Accept nothing other than certification as the only method to protect the public health and the environment.

Most of all, deal with companies who have earned the ADWA Award of Excellence who can ensure quality products and excellent service.

