



## Market Check Testing Policy

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### What is Market Check Testing?

Market Check Testing verifies that the quality and performance of products sold in the market match the levels measured during certification entry testing (using the Quality Test Method (QTM) and reported on Standardized Specification Sheets).<sup>1</sup> The goal is to ensure the quality and performance of products in the market is consistent and matches advertised levels.

### How frequently does VeraSol conduct Market Check Testing?

Check testing may be conducted at any time on products that are supported by VeraSol. Selection of products for Market Check Testing and frequency of testing is at the discretion of VeraSol.

### How are samples selected for Market Check Testing?

When market check testing occurs, an agent of VeraSol randomly and anonymously procures samples from retail outlets in the market. VeraSol or an approved third party agent may also randomly procure product samples stored at warehouses, distributorships, factories or other bulk storage locations. The VeraSol team may periodically ask manufacturers or distributors to provide a list of no fewer than 10 outlets to enable sampling. Sampling locations may be chosen from a subset of those outlets or from others that are independently identified.

### How does Market Check Testing work?

Market Check Testing involves a two-stage process. The first stage, referred to as **Primary Check Testing**, involves testing two samples that are randomly sampled as outlined by IEC 62257-9-5, Annex E. At this stage of the process, two or more samples of the product may be evaluated in each of the tests. Note that the required tests may include all of the QTM tests, or a targeted

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<sup>1</sup> The Quality Test Method (QTM) and Initial Screening Method (ISM) are described in the test methods used for testing solar products, IEC 62257-9-5:2018 (also written as IEC/TS 62257-9-5 ed.4).

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subset of the QTM tests. The sample size used at this stage is based on the discretion of VeraSol, but is typically a sample size identical to the guidance provided for QTM testing. If the results meet or exceed the applicable Quality Standards<sup>2</sup>, no further action is required.

However, if the results indicate possible deficiencies relative to the Quality Standards, additional testing may be used to confirm the problem. Companies will be provided with the results from the Primary Check Testing and given two weeks to provide a plan to address the issues identified or agree to undergo additional testing.<sup>3 4 5</sup> This subsequent testing, referred to as **Secondary Check Testing**, will focus only on aspects of the product that appeared to have deficiencies according to the Primary Check Testing results. Secondary Check Testing will be conducted with the same sample size as required for QTM testing of the same aspect.

Once testing is complete, regardless of the results, the company will receive a confidential test report and a letter that summarizes the outcome. If the results meet or exceed the Quality Standards, no further action is required. However, if the results indicate deficiencies relative to the Quality Standards, the product will lose its quality-assured status with the program and access to services that are contingent on that status. A flow diagram of the Market Check Test is provided at the end of this document.

### **What happens if a product fails the Market Check Test?**

If a product fails a Primary Market Check Test, there are several options for next steps:

1. If a company believes that their product meets the Quality Standards, but the limited sample size of the Primary Market Check Test provided incorrect results, then they can agree to have the product undergo a Secondary Market Check Test. This test will be conducted at the company's expense.
2. If a product conditionally passes (does not meet the Quality Standards due to easy-to-fix issues), the company may have the option to correct some issues to maintain the product's quality-assured status as described in the [Conditional Pass Policy](#).
3. If a company acknowledges that the Primary Market Check Test has identified a shortcoming of their product, the company may choose to make changes to the product to correct the issue. In this case, the product would temporarily lose program support and be removed from the website. Once the changes are made, the company can contact VeraSol to arrange for re-testing of the product at the company's expense. Depending on the nature of the changes, targeted re-testing of specific aspects may be appropriate, or a full

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<sup>3</sup> Upon request and at the discretion of VeraSol, companies may be granted an additional two weeks to finalize a decision if they are actively engaging with the VeraSol team regarding the issue.

<sup>4</sup> See the [Conditional Pass Policy](#) regarding options to address easy-to-fix issues.

<sup>5</sup> As part of meeting the Quality Standards, product performance will be compared to all public-facing advertising, including the VeraSol Standardized Specification Sheets (SSS). If the product performance is lower than what is reported on the SSS, but accurate in all other consumer-facing locations, the product will receive a "conditional pass" for which VeraSol can adjust the values on the SSS to maintain the product's certification status.

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QTM test of the product may be required. If the product passes, then the product's quality-assured status will be reinstated.

4. If a company does not respond with an adequate choice within the two-week period, the product will lose program support and be removed from the website.<sup>6</sup> If the company then requests to have the product re-listed, the product would need to undergo a full QTM test to verify that it now meets the Quality Standards.<sup>7</sup>

In the case where a product fails according to both Primary and Secondary Market Check Testing, the product loses any benefits associated with having met the Quality Standards.

If a product fails the Market Check Test, a company can attempt to regain certification status by undergoing full QTM product testing.

### **Who pays for Market Check Testing?**

VeraSol pays for the sample procurement, delivery and testing for Primary Market Check Testing. If a product fails a Primary Market Check Test, and the company chooses to undergo a Secondary Market Check Test, the company will be responsible for the sample procurement and testing cost. If a product fails both the Primary and Secondary Market Check Testing, and the company desires to regain the product's certification status, the company is responsible for payment of all sampling and testing fees required to reinstate the product's certification status.

### **Does VeraSol conduct any other forms of market monitoring?**

VeraSol also conducts **Market Observations** in which VeraSol staff or third party agents examine certified products in the marketplace or online, typically to assess aspects related to the consumer-facing information, such as the packaging, advertising, warranty and user manual. VeraSol certified products advertised or sold on any website must follow the [Performance Reporting Requirements](#) and the [Communications and Branding Guidelines](#). If a product is found to be deficient in any aspect, the company will be contacted and will need to provide a plan to correct the issues as described in the [Conditional Pass Policy](#). If issues are not adequately addressed within 30 days, the product may lose certification and be removed from VeraSol's product database.

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<sup>6</sup> Upon request, companies may be granted an additional two weeks to finalize a decision if they are actively engaging with the VeraSol team regarding the issue.

<sup>7</sup> Under certain conditions, a company may be able to pursue one of the options above rather than undergoing a full QTM test. In these rare cases, the product would not regain certification or be listed on VeraSol's product database until it was determined that the product continues to meet the Quality Standards.

**About VeraSol**

An evolution of Lighting Global Quality Assurance, the VeraSol program supports high-performing, durable off-grid products that expand access to modern energy services. VeraSol builds upon the strong foundation for quality assurance laid by the World Bank Group and expands its services to encompass off-grid appliances, productive use equipment, and component-based solar home systems. Like Lighting Global Quality Assurance, the VeraSol program is managed by CLASP in collaboration with the Schatz Energy Research Center at California State Polytechnic University, HUmboldt. Foundational support is provided by the World Bank Group’s Lighting Global program, UKaid, IKEA Foundation, Good Energies Foundation, and others.

Please visit [VeraSol.org](http://VeraSol.org) for more information.