

North American Product Safety Approval Marks Used on Xantrex Products

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Summary

Xantrex works with three main North American regulatory agencies to obtain product safety approvals on its products. Each agency has one or more approval marks that may appear on Xantrex products, with subtle differences between the meaning of some of these marks. This paper explains the different marks used, their meaning, and legal status.

Introduction

Historically, approvals agencies were unique to each country and often there was only one valid agency. For example, Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) was the valid US agency, as was the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) for Canada. With the global trend towards minimizing trade barriers, this situation has changed significantly. The monopolies that some of these agencies enjoyed are being eliminated.

The two main activities of regulatory agencies are to create and maintain standards, and to certify products to those standards. The trend, so far, is toward free trade in certification services, but not in standards writing. Countries are insisting on the use of their national standards, but they are willing to let all formally qualified ("accredited") agencies certify products to those standards. This is true for competing agencies from within the country and from other countries, as long as the agency is accredited by that country.

As a result of this trend, marketplaces are seeing an increasing number of unfamiliar certification marks. However unfamiliar these marks may be, they are as legally valid as the traditional agency mark for that country, as long as the agency involved is properly accredited and performed the certification to the correct national standard.

The North American Situation

The general case in the U.S. is that electrical equipment is required to be approved to the applicable UL standard, by any agency listed as a Nationally Recognized Test Lab (NRTL) by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The OSHA list of acceptable labs includes UL, CSA, Intertek Testing Services (ITS), TUV, Electro-Test, Factory Mutual, and many others, thus providing freedom for manufacturers to work with the agency of their choice for obtaining approvals to UL standards.

The situation is similar in Canada. The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) has accredited many certification agencies, but product certifications are required to be done to the applicable CSA standard. The list of SCC-accredited agencies includes CSA, UL, ITS, TUV,

MET Laboratories, Entela, and many others from which a manufacturer can select for certifying products to CSA standards.

Many of these agencies are accredited in both the US (for UL standards) and Canada (for CSA standards). This dual accreditation provides an opportunity for a manufacturer to save significant time and cost by using a single agency of their choice, for product approvals for both markets. As a result, a product that used to be marked with both the CSA Certification and UL Listing marks may now have only a single agency's mark on it.






This single mark forces the agencies to devise ways of indicating the scope of the work done as part of their certification mark, so you can tell, for example, the difference between a UL listing that covers both the US and Canada, and one that covers only the US. Fortunately, the main agencies have settled on a fairly consistent scheme where the following letters are added to their certification mark to indicate the scope of the work:




- the letter “C” signifies certification to a CSA standard for the Canadian market
- the letters “US” signify certification to a UL standard for the U.S. market

In addition to these clarifying letters, some agencies require that the standard used be identified as part of the marking. Xantrex has adopted this practice for many of its product markings, and has listed the CSA and UL standard numbers used, to provide further clarification of what the approval mark really means.

Agency Approval Marks on Xantrex Products

The following table shows examples of approval marks used on Xantrex products, along with their meaning.

Agency Approval Mark	Meaning
	Either of these marks means that the product is approved by CSA to the UL and CSA standards, for both the US and Canadian markets. The “NRTL/C” version of the mark is older and being phased out.
	Either of these marks means that the product is approved by CSA to the UL standards, for the US market only. The “NRTL” version of the mark is older and being phased out.
	The product is approved by UL, to both the CSA and UL standards, for both Canadian and US markets
	Either of these marks means the product is approved (Listed) by UL to the UL standards, for the US market only
	The product is approved by UL, to the CSA standards, for the Canadian market only

Agency Approval Mark	Meaning
	The product is approved by ETL to the UL standards, for the US market only
	The product is approved by ETL to the CSA standards, for the Canadian market only
	The product is approved by ETL to the UL and CSA standards, for both the US and Canadian markets

Indication of Agency Standards and File Numbers

The following examples show that on some products, the approval mark carries additional information, such as the numbers of the standards applied, the agency file number, and application-specific information:

Example 1:



The marking in Example 1 indicates that the product has been approved by CSA to the UL and CSA standards for Test and Measurement equipment (UL 3111 (also referred to as UL 3101-1) and CSA 1010). This approval is valid for both the US and Canadian markets.

Example 2:



The marking in Example 2 indicates the product has been approved by CSA to the UL and CSA standards for power converters for use in recreational vehicles and boats (UL 458 and CSA 107.1), including the additional requirements for marine products. This approval is valid in both the US and Canadian markets, for both dry-land and marine applications.

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Contact information:

Phone: 1-800-670-0707 (toll-free in North America)

Phone: 1-604-422-2777 (direct)

Fax: 1-604-420-2145 (direct)

Email: CustomerService@xantrex.com

Web: www.xantrex.com