

THE MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO THE FASTENER QUALITY ACT OF 1990

The Fastener Quality Act, signed by President Clinton on June 8, 1999, includes a number of amendments to the original legislation passed in 1990 to make it more focused and less burdensome. These include:

ELIMINATED REQUIREMENTS

The amended law no longer requires the [Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) to approve organizations that accredit fastener testing laboratories.

COVERED FASTENERS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

Fasteners covered under the FQA are defined as limited to bolts, nuts, screws and studs (having a nominal diameter of 6 millimeters/0.25 inch or greater), or direct tension-indicating washers that are through-hardened (or meet a consensus standard that calls for through-hardening) and manufactured to standards and specifications of consensus standards organizations or government agencies that require a grade mark.

Many fasteners are exempted from coverage including those:

- that are part of an assembly
- that are ordered for use as a spare, substitute, service or replacement part unless that part is in a package containing more than 75 of any such part at the time of sale or that part is contained in an assembly kit
- produced and marked as ASTM A 307 Grade A;
- produced in accordance with the ASTM F 432 standard;
- specifically manufactured for an aircraft if the quality is approved by the Federal Aviation Administration or by a foreign airworthiness authority;
- manufactured in accordance with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9000, 9001, 9002, or TS16949; Quality system (QS) 9000; or other fastener quality assurance system defined by law; or
- manufactured to a proprietary standard.

To encourage the use of quality management systems such as QS 9000, fasteners are exempt from the FQA if they are manufactured in a facility using such a system.

If an accreditation organization chooses not to follow ISO guidelines for registration

and accreditation, they may submit documents to the NIST director that establish their own guidance/requirements for (1) accredited bodies to register manufacturing systems as meeting FQA quality assurance requirements; (2) accreditation of testing laboratories; and (3) approval of accreditation bodies to accredit testing labs.

REDUCED PAPERWORK

To reduce paperwork recordkeeping burdens, companies are allowed to transmit and store electronically all records on fastener quality provided there are reasonable means of authentication of the source of the document and reasonable protection against alteration.

The record required for a covered fastener will be the record of conformance that identifies the fastener by description, lot number and the manufacturer; and includes other information defined by the law.

HOTLINE

To combat the manufacture, sales or distribution of fasteners that are fraudulent under the FQA, the Commerce Department will establish and maintain a hotline for reporting alleged violations of the law. A system will be created to evaluate reports to the hotline. All credible allegations would then be forwarded to the Attorney General.