



# Quality Certification Alliance

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## Measuring and Defining Product Manufacturing Security Compliance

“Compliance” is alternatively defined as the “act or process of complying to a desire, demand or proposal or to coercion,” “the act of conforming, acquiescing or yielding,” and “the act of cooperation or obedience.”

As “compliance” is used in relation to the standards advocated by QCA, it is complying to regulatory and legal standards, best practice standards and other applicable voluntary standards as appropriate. Companies’ practices that have been accredited under the auspices of QCA are deemed to MEET OR EXCEED requirements, whether those requirements are regulatory (legal) in nature or best practices.

## Supply Chain Security Systems Compliance

QCA measures and evaluates the management practices – a company’s policies, procedures and protocols – that provide visibility into the supply chain and the processes assuring predictability in the secure delivery of product manufactured and shipped under the company’s name.

All accredited companies must have:

- A documented security policy that applies to all members of the supply chain as well as their headquarters.
- A documented protocol for controlling entry to and exit from the workplace and a documented means to assess the effectiveness of similar protocols in the supply base.
- A documented mechanism for recruiting and identifying workforce.
- A documented protocol for assuring visibility to all levels of the supply chain.
- A documented protocol for validating all merchandise shipped under the auspices of the company is shipped in a secure manner from manufacturing source to the company’s domestic warehouse.
- A documented protocol for controlling access to all information technology platforms.
- Supply Chain Security compliance-related accountabilities are assigned to a senior position.

## Supply Chain Security Systems Best Practices

Best practices are those activities implemented by individual companies that assist in achieving compliance over a set of processes. Not all accredited companies will adopt identical best practices. Companies frequently have different methodologies for achieving the same outcome. Arguably, best practices are considered to be strategic decisions on the part of a company given their internal structure, size and product line.

Best practices advocated for the predictability they offer in assuring supply chain security include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing the level of scrutiny for hiring and employment of logistics personnel
- Implementation of an electronic key system that permits access to authorized personnel and maintains records of those authorized entries
- Implementation of an auto-expiry dates for passwords that require users, on a pre-determined basis, to change or revise passwords
- Implementation of logistics tracking incorporating correlation of bills of lading with container seals
- Implementation of supplier scorecards incorporating onsite evaluation
- CTPAT certification
- Appointment of a logistics officer

### **Supply Chain Security Certifications**

US ports are considered to be among the most vulnerable post-9/11 targets. As a response to the attacks and as a way to achieve a higher level of port security, US Customs and industry representatives catalogued best practices that best assure security throughout the supply chain, while facilitating trade. The Customs – Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) prioritized management practices and other criteria into an assessment regime that may result in three classes of certification: Tier I, Tier II or Tier III. This certification requires annual upkeep through reporting and auditing.

As noted above, QCA applicants need not achieve CTPAT certification to successfully complete QCA accreditation requirements. QCA does, however, advocate CTPAT certification as best practice, accepting Tier I or higher accreditation in lieu of QCA testing for supply chain security.

Other countries and trading blocs have developed similar mechanisms for demonstrating supply chain security, such as Canada's Partners in Protection program, the EU's Authorized Economic Operators program and the International Standards Organizations' 28000:2007 protocol.

Because QCA's primary focus is on the US market, only CTPAT certification is recognized as a suitable alternative to QCA assessment and audit.