COPANT Virtual Workshop: Commercial Information on Appliance Labels

COPANT (Pan American Standards Commission) successfully conducted the Virtual Exchange Workshop, focusing on the theme "Best Practices for Commercial Information on Appliance Labels." The event took place on August 10, 2023, and saw the participation of 38 attendees from 9 countries in the region, including Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Sonia Rebollar, representing NYCE (Normalization and Certification) from Mexico, is a graduate in International Business with an impressive 27-year career in foreign trade. Her expertise lies in the import of finished products and compliance with Mexican regulations (NOMs). Throughout her career, she has led optimization processes, value chain adaptations, and has actively participated in conformity assessment subcommittees.

Ms. Rebollar addressed the critical topic of appliance labeling in Mexico. The Federal Consumer Protection Law mandates requirements for imported products, such as the necessity to indicate origin, instructions, and warranties. In this regard, the Ministry of Economy issues NOMs (Official Mexican Standards), while PROFECO (Federal Consumer Protection Agency) oversees compliance, promoting a culture of responsible consumption.

It is imperative that instruction manuals contain detailed information, including manufacturer names, precautions, electrical characteristics, and warnings. Warnings must remain for hazardous products, and installation details are required. Regulations are mandatory in most cases, except for highly specialized products. Compliance involves traceability and warranties in Spanish.
PROFECO assumes the role of supervision, and the importer assumes responsibility. Inspections evaluate conformity and energy efficiency. To consult applicable standards, the Official Gazette or the Ministry of Economy are essential sources. Consistency in labeling and warranties is essential to protect consumers. Based on the Harmonized System, these regulations prioritize providing accurate and comprehensive information without allowing additional charges for this information.

Joshua Boodhu, from TBBS, Trinidad and Tobago, presented Standard TTCS 24, a national standard specifying safety requirements for all electrical appliances produced, imported, or used in Trinidad and Tobago. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the latest versions of internationally accepted standards, including those developed by UL and IEC. Labeling information must be clear and legible and in English. If graphic symbols are used, they must adhere to ISO 7000/IEC 60417 standards. The regulations encompass aspects such as voltage, current, origin information, and certification marks, even for appliances with refrigerants. Compliance oversight falls to TTBS, with potential sanctions and the withdrawal of non-compliant products. Additionally, upcoming energy efficiency standards for refrigerators and air conditioners, slated to become mandatory in 2024, are mentioned. Standards are categorized into mandatory, impacting health, safety, and the environment, and voluntary, with discretionary acceptance.

Daniel Marcillo, from INEN, Ecuador, detailed the strengthening of regulatory best practices in Ecuador, which includes implementing international standards and streamlining procedures. Based on international agreements such as those on technical barriers to trade and the Andean Decision 827 of the Andean Community, the process is guided by the Ecuadorian Quality System Law. INEN, tasked with formulating technical regulations, engages the community through public consultations and technical committees. Regulations are based on international standards and focus on protecting legitimate objectives, aiming for harmonization and uniformity. In the absence of certification bodies, the supplier's declaration is applied. Stakeholders can access draft regulations on INEN's website and participate in technical committees, promoting transparency and continuous improvement.

This Exchange Workshop underscores COPANT's commitment to foster knowledge and experience sharing among the region's countries, with the goal of enhancing the quality and safety of products available to consumers.

For further information on COPANT's events and activities, interested parties can visit the official website at: http://www.copant.org

You can access the recording of the Workshop HERE