How Do You Know You're Buying the Right Electrical Product?

When you're buying an electrical product, the Corporation des maîtres électriciens du Québec (CMEQ) strongly recommends that you make sure that it's properly certified. While Canada prohibits the sale of products that aren't (or aren't yet) certified, some still make their way onto the shelves.

In order to get a product certified, manufacturers must have the product inspected, perform lab testing, and make sure that it complies with Canadian standards. Certification is important because it assures consumers that the products they are buying meet national standards and requirements. In Canada, the Standards Council of Canada is the certifying authority. This government body certifies laboratories as independent testing laboratories and specifies their scope of accreditation.

Product testing primarily checks for hazards, namely fire, shock, radiation, and heat. To determine whether a product has undergone this testing and has been certified, consumers need to look for a seal (in the form of a mark) on the product, label, or packaging. Typical seals include CSA, UL, ULC, ETL, and ESA. See the Approbation d'appareillage section (available in French only) of the Régie du bâtiment du Québec's website to see the certification marks that are recognized in Canada.

While certification marks are a good indicators, consumers may also ensure that a product is compliant by asking an electrical contractor. These professionals can choose the best product for the location and intended use and guarantee that the products they're installing will work properly. Note that under Quebec law, it is forbidden for a person to carry out electrical work of any kind, for their home or anyone else's, unless that person holds a valid electrical contractor's licence.

Electrical contractors are the best way for consumers to make sure that a product is compliant.

Source: CMEQ, Direction des communications
514 738-2184