



# Qualification of Category C Distributors

*DLA LAND AND MARITIME –VQ  
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## PREAMBLE

This document is applicable to the MIL-STD-790 and the DoD Qualification Program administered by the DLA Land and Maritime Sourcing and Qualifications Division (DLA Land and Maritime-VQ) in its capacity as the qualifying activity. This publication has been developed to outline and discuss the elements of a Category C distributor.

The details discussed in this publication apply only to qualification programs administered by the DLA Land and Maritime Sourcing and Qualifications Division in its capacity as qualifying activity for specifications requiring MIL-STD-790 and its elements.

The manufacturer, by application and subsequent listing on a Qualified Products List (QPL), agrees to comply with all provisions specified in the applicable specification and herein.

This publication outlines the elements necessary for the Category C distributor to participate in the QPL program.

The QPL program is designed to assure a requisite level of performance, quality, and reliability necessary for the Department of Defense (DoD).

Any QPL Program questions or clarifications of a general nature should be directed to:

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Thank you for your participation and support of the Department of Defense (DoD) Product Qualification Program.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH GEMPERLINE  
Chief  
Sourcing and Qualifications Division

## INTRODUCTION

This publication has been developed to outline and discuss the elements needed for manufacturers to successfully qualify a Category C distributor for listing on the Qualified Products List (QPL).

The information in this document is supplementary to Provisions Governing Qualification (SD-6), Defense Standardization Program Policies and Procedures (DoD 4120.24-M) and Standard Practice for Established Reliability and High Reliability Qualified Products Lists (QPL) Systems for Electrical, Electronic and Fiber Optic Parts Specifications (MIL-STD-790). It does not supersede or waive the provisions of these documents or of the applicable military and federal specifications.

The details discussed in this publication apply only to qualification programs administered by DLA Land and Maritime Sourcing and Qualifications Division (VQ) in its capacity as Qualifying Activity for assigned military specifications.

The manufacturer, by application and subsequent listing on a QPL, agrees to comply with all provisions prescribed in the applicable specification and herein.

**Electronic/Alternate Media Submission Option: DLA Land and Maritime requests that all correspondence be submitted in electronic format. Examples of this include requests for technical evaluations, qualification reports, mandatory retention testing and requests for testing authorization. In the event that a specific report or document is of very large size (>5MB), please submit the information by mail or commercial carrier on a compact disc (CD). The submission of electronic documents will help our office evaluate your questions/issues in a more efficient and expeditious manner.**

This publication outlines the necessary elements for an acceptable Category C distributor program. This publication will list the key elements required but leaves the format and implementation of these elements to the manufacturer.

## POINTS OF CONTACTS

Requests for an assessment or for further information about the Category C distributor program within MIL-STD-790 should be directed to one of the VQ contacts listed below:

Request for copies of DoD 4120.24M (Defense Standardization Program (DSP) Policies and Procedures, SD-6 (Provisions Governing Qualification Qualified Products List), MIL-STD-790, MIL-STD-202, and any other military document should be addressed to:

DoD Single Stock Point Special Assistance Desk  
Bldg 4/D, 700 Robbins Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19111-5094  
(215) 697-2667 or (215) 697-2179  
M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST)  
See web site [www.dodssp.daps.mil](http://www.dodssp.daps.mil).

NOTE: All forms referenced herein are available from the DLA Land and Maritime-VQ point of contact, the DLA Land and Maritime-VQ Forms booklet, or by visiting our web site:

[http://www.landandmaritime.dla.mil/offices/sourcing\\_and\\_qualification](http://www.landandmaritime.dla.mil/offices/sourcing_and_qualification)

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NOTE: This information is correct as of the date of publication. For up to date information, check the VQ web page.

Comments or recommendations that may be of use in improving this document should be emailed to [vqp.chief@dla.mil](mailto:vqp.chief@dla.mil). Requests for copies of this document should also be forwarded to one of these addresses.

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## Provisions Governing Qualification of Category C Distributors

**1.0 Distributors:** Manufacturers validated to this standard may authorize distributors to perform additional functions and operations on the qualified products. The manufacturer is responsible for validation of these distributors to the requirements of this standard as applicable. The controls and requirements shall be such as to assure the product sold by distributor is of the same quality and performance as parts supplied directly from the manufacturer. The manufacturer is responsible for ensuring that all products sold through these distributors meet the requirements of the applicable product specifications. The manufacturer shall identify each distributor and the functions that they are authorized to perform according to the following categories:

**1.1 Category A:** This category is authorized to store, pack, handle, and distribute qualified products.

**1.2 Category B:** This category of distributor is authorized to perform additional operations, tests, and inspections in addition to responsibilities of a category A distributor. If the distributor is authorized to mark the parts, a code symbol is to be added to the modified part to identify the distributor (in accordance with agreement with original manufacturer) in addition to the original part marking and lot identification by the manufacturer.

**1.3 Category C:** This category is a Value Added Distributor (VAD) that has been approved by a qualified manufacturer and the qualifying activity to assemble QPL products using piece parts received from the manufacturer in addition to the responsibilities of a Category B distributor including part marking. Approval includes but is not limited to the following:

- a. Distributor shall be audited by the qualified manufacturer to ensure compliance to all applicable specifications. The qualifying activity reserves the right to perform an audit of the distributor.
- b. The qualified manufacturer shall be responsible for any and all problems associated with QPL products assembled at the Category C distributor.

## **2.0 Elements of Category C distributors (VAD)**

### **2.1 Audits**

Audits of VADs\* shall be part of the manufacturer's yearly internal audit. All elements of MIL-STD-790 must be evaluated by an auditor that is certified by the manufacturer. The manufacturer must maintain records of all VAD audits per the applicable record retention requirements. \*Note: Every two years the manufacturer must do a physical audit of each VAD. During the off years, the manufacturer can certify a person at the VAD to conduct the yearly audit.

## **2.2 Document Control**

The content of the VAD's assembly procedures and routers shall be identical to the manufacturer's documents and all changes shall be approved by the qualified manufacturer. All documents given to VADs must be recorded by manufacturer's document control system, and there must be a cognizant authority at the manufacturer to track this. Any exceptions given to the VAD must be documented by the manufacturer.

## **2.3 Training**

Training VAD personnel on manufacturing processes must initially be provided by the manufacturer. Personnel at the VAD may be approved by the manufacturer to perform as trainers. All trainer certificates must be on file at the manufacturer. This shall include trainers that were later approved by the VAD (if applicable).

## **2.4 Production**

Routers that are recreated by VADs shall be approved by the manufacturer. Translation for additional languages must be addressed and verified by the manufacturer. Manufacturers must ensure that the VAD does not mix the production lines and manufacturing processes of other manufacturers (e.g. mixing on one router, two or more different manufacturer's product lines for the same military part number).

## **2.5 Traceability**

VADs must follow all traceability requirements in both MIL-STD-790 and the applicable specification. The manufacturer is responsible for ensuring that this requirement is met.

## **2.6 Use of approved materials**

There should be no substitutions of materials at the VAD that are not part of the manufacturer's normal production without approval of the manufacturer and the qualifying activity. This includes the use of consumable materials such as epoxies, sealants, inks and adhesives.

## **2.7 Shelf-Life materials**

These materials must be controlled per the elements of MIL-STD-790, the applicable specification, and the manufacturer's documented procedures.

## **2.8 Calibration**

All measuring equipment must be calibrated, continually monitored and the system shall be evaluated on a yearly basis by manufacturer.

## **2.9 Controlled storage areas for components and finished product**

All components and finished product from different manufacturers must be segregated and clearly identified to prevent co-mingling.

### **2.9.1 Control of Inventories**

All VADs must be included in the manufacturer's Engineering Change Noticing (ECN) process to safeguard that any design changes don't affect the VAD's inventory.

### **2.10 Marking**

Marking must be validated regularly as marking deficiencies are a common finding during audits of VADs. All marking shall be done in accordance with MIL-STD-790, the applicable specification and manufacturer's documented procedures.

### **2.11 Lot Acceptance Testing (Example: Group A&B in most specifications) and documentation**

- a. Any lot acceptance testing to be performed shall be specified, directed and verified by the manufacturer.
- b. The VAD must use the Qualifying Activity's (VQ) Lot Acceptance Report document. Lot Acceptance-VQP document can be found at the following link:  
[http://www.landandmaritime.dla.mil/Offices/Sourcing\\_and\\_Qualification/resource.aspx](http://www.landandmaritime.dla.mil/Offices/Sourcing_and_Qualification/resource.aspx)
- c. All lot acceptance testing done at the VAD shall be reported to the Qualifying Activity with the manufacturer's lot acceptance testing data as specified by the MIL-STD-790 and the applicable specification. It is the manufacturer's responsibility to ensure that this data is collected, collated and reported properly.
- d. Included in the lot acceptance testing report shall be a summary list of all customer returns and any corrective actions taken for each VAD (minimal information is military part number, lot date code or other identifier, quantity returned, reason for rejection, and resolution). The information for each VAD must be separated and organized in the report to the qualifying activity.

### **2.12 Retention/Requalification (Example: Group C in most specifications) Testing Samples**

- a. Each VAD must provide to the QPL manufacturer two mated pair samples for retention testing. This is in addition to the samples that are provided by the manufacturer for retention testing.
- b. Samples must be subjected to all tests that cover manufacturing areas performed at the VAD (i.e. insert retention, shell spring finger force, air leakage, etc...).
- c. The VAD's retention data shall be separate from the manufacturer's retention data and labeled as such.
- d. All qualification and retention data as well as associated samples shall be retained by the manufacturer for at least five years.

### **2.13 Returns and Corrective and Preventive Actions**

- a. A VAD must document all customer returns and provide a monthly report to the manufacturer.
- b. The manufacturer shall react to trends in the customer return data and an individual at the manufacturer shall be designated as responsible for this process.
- c. All corrective actions from customer returns shall be closed within 30 days after the monthly report is submitted to the manufacturer by the VAD.

### **2.14 Records**

All records created by the VAD must be maintained for five years by the VAD or manufacturer.

### **2.15 VAD Quality Issues Identified by Qualifying Activity**

If the Qualifying Activity is made aware of any issues with a part produced at a VAD, they will notify the manufacturer of the problem. The manufacturer will have 14 days to respond to the Qualifying Activity with a formal corrective action response or the manufacturer may be removed from the QPL. In addition, A GIDEP Alert may be necessary.

### **2.16 Adding VADs**

The following information is needed to add a new VAD and can be electronically sent\* to DLA Land and Maritime-VQP:

- a. An official letter requesting Value-Added Distributor (VAD) approval.
- b. The name and address of VAD and brief explanation of the processes (e.g. connector assembly, part marking, testing) the VAD will be responsible to perform.
- c. A marketing plan that explains the purpose of adding the VAD, the companies and/or industries the manufacturer shall supply, a list of part numbers that will be assembled by the VAD, and the forecasted production numbers.
- d. The contract between the manufacturer and VAD.
- e. The manufacturer's audit report and approved corrective actions.
- f. A master list of documents that are approved by manufacturer that will be utilized by the VAD.

- g. The approved Traveler/Router and work instructions the VAD will utilize during assembly.
- h. Initial product verification testing which requires at least lot acceptance testing of the VAD assembled product. Sample size is usually two of each size unless the specification allows for qualification by similarities. All qualification by similarities shall be explained.
- i. The manufacturer's future audit/surveillance plan of the VAD.

Once the above items are received, reviewed and approved by the Qualifying Activity (VQ), the Qualifying Activity will issue an approval letter to the manufacturer which is their authorization to begin production at the VAD. **No VADs may begin production without written approval from the Qualifying Activity (VQ).**

**\*Note: When sending the information electronically, please ensure all attachments include one of the labels a-i.**

#### **2.17 Adding Additional responsibilities to existing VADs**

The qualifying activity must be notified concerning any changes made to an approved VAD. Examples of changes would be adding or deleting of part numbers or testing.

#### **2.18 Changes to Existing VAD listings**

For VAD address, name and ownership changes please reference the Qualified Products List Qualified Manufacturers List booklet at the following link:

[http://www.landandmaritime.dla.mil/Downloads/VQGeneral/VQ\\_Qual\\_Book\\_0806.pdf](http://www.landandmaritime.dla.mil/Downloads/VQGeneral/VQ_Qual_Book_0806.pdf)

#### **2.19 Certificate of Conformance**

The manufacturer's Certificate of Conformance and other traceability documents must be on file for all components procured by the VAD from the original manufacturer, other qualified VADs or any other company.

#### **2.20 Common Findings at VADs**

- a. Unapproved variations in the process which includes manufacturing procedures and material substitution.
- b. Incorrect marking.
- c. Lack of oversight by the manufacturer.
- d. Yearly audits are not performed.
- e. Traceability is not maintained.