

# V-TRUST INSIGHTS

## November 2020



### Product Defects | How can you identify them?

Sometimes what you consider a "defect" is not a product quality problem in eyes of your manufacturer. To avoid misunderstandings and large loss due to incorrect quality in the future, better to establish the QC vocabulary with your supplier at the first steps of your negotiations.

For that, many importers choose to create a list of acceptable and unacceptable product defects and pass it along with the purchase order to supplier. In this article we will share with you some tips and examples on how to identify product defects.

Product quality is assessed and accepted worldwide based on the AQL standard (click here to learn how to read AQL). AQL indicates the maximum acceptable defects for a certain sample size of products inspected.

Usually in Production and Quality Control defects are classified in three types: Critical, Major and Minor.

#### Critical defects

Critical defects are defined as non-compliance with mandatory regulations that may harm the consumer's health, safety, or the environment. These include defects of product functionality and safety, as well as defects in product quality, i.e. appearance.

For electrical products, an example of a critical defect would be if your product doesn't pass a hi-pot test or earth continuity testing, indicating unsafety of the product that poses a risk of electric shock.

For textile products, the detection of broken needles in a textile piece will be considered a critical defect, and for children's toys - the presence of sharp corners of plastic/metal that can harm a child is considered critical.

Also, defects related to non-compliance with hygiene, product storage conditions and the risk of spreading diseases, for example, the presence of hair, mold, blood drops on the product or packaging, traces of insects, etc.

The default tolerance for critical defects according to AQL is 0, which means that even if one critical defect is detected, it is not recommended to accept the batch for shipment, and better to recheck the whole production again for defects.

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### Insights

#### New UKCA marking to start in January 2021



Due to the UK leaving the EU, starting from 1 January 2021, the UKCA mark will be the conformity assessment marking for goods being placed on the market in Great Britain (England, Wales, and Scotland) and it covers most products that previously required the CE mark.

The UKCA marking alone cannot be used for goods placed on the Northern Ireland market, which require the CE marking or UK(NI) marking. See the guidance on placing goods on the Northern Ireland market.

However, to allow time for adjustments to the new requirements, businesses will still be able to use the CE marking until 1 January 2022 in most cases.

The UKCA marking will not be recognised on the EU market. Products that currently require a CE marking will still need a CE marking for sale in the EU from 1 January 2021.

From 1 January 2022, the CE marking will not be recognised in Great Britain for the areas covered by the government's guidance – including gas appliances. However, a product bearing the CE marking will still be valid on the UK market as long as it was also UKCA marked and complied with the relevant UK rules.

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## Sample Comparison Testing Leads to Innovation

When the careful task of sourcing for a product is finally over, you will then be ready for the next step of your journey: requesting product samples.

Requesting samples also assists you ensure a supplier's expertise. You can also get a better idea of how they might work with in aspects as to how they collaborate, how quickly they are processing and shipping out orders, and how well they are packaging their products and plenty of other things.

From the point of view of a supplier, making samples to the specifications of the buyer isn't an easy task. Not only will it take time, there is also high potential for failure because maybe not all manufacturers are capable.

Having additional suppliers as a backup is essential just in case the first few ones fail to make samples according to your standard so it makes a lot of sense to have to order samples from several suppliers.

Once you receive the samples from Supplier A, Supplier B and Supplier C (and D, E, F... preferably), you will have the following questions to be asked,

- ▶ Which samples offer a better performance in comparison to competing products?
- ▶ Which features are implemented better/worse in each sample?
- ▶ What can be improved?

### Sample Comparison Testing as a Solution

Having a technical insight on what each tested sample perform well can teach you things about your own products. Professionally assessing samples from multiple suppliers will provide you with valuable insight into the state of the market, and ensure what is suitable for your business and what isn't.

It's particularly important to consistently execute benchmarking tests and make good use of them to check your specific objectives. It assists you to compare the test results to previous benchmark ratings, and to measure the performance, functionality, and safety of your products over time.

### What are the results?

After the comparison tests, you will receive a comprehensive report including a specification sheet for each sample compared. We describe in detail which tests we conducted and how the samples performed in each of these tests.

You can retrace exactly how a sample performed in comparison to another in each benchmark category. You also receive an overview of the identified product usability problems and their severity. Our engineers give recommendations for solutions to the problems, and help you to improve your product even more.

V-Trust has a solid and long history in providing quality control services including product inspection, supplier evaluation, and laboratory testing for retailers, consumer brands, private labels, and all importers and traders willing to have a comprehensive assessment before their products are shipped from Asia.

Find out how V-Trust can help set your company apart from the competition by verifying whether your products are in compliance with your requirements and standards.

## V-Trust Team



Members of the V-Trust Team recently completed a week of upskill training for on-site inspections, then enjoyed a nice afternoon of teambuilding at the Huangpu Military Academy Museum in Guangzhou. The weather was perfect and we got to learn a bit of history while unwinding from the long week.

There is always something more to be learned, presenting countless opportunities to improve ourselves both professionally and personally. We're all grateful to have each other for support as well as motivation to keep growing. From our team to yours, we wish you health and happiness!



Participants of the V-Trust Pilot Program of Young Leadership met in the coastal city of Zhuhai in southern China's Guangdong province for a full weekend of intensive learning, knowledge sharing, and companionship.

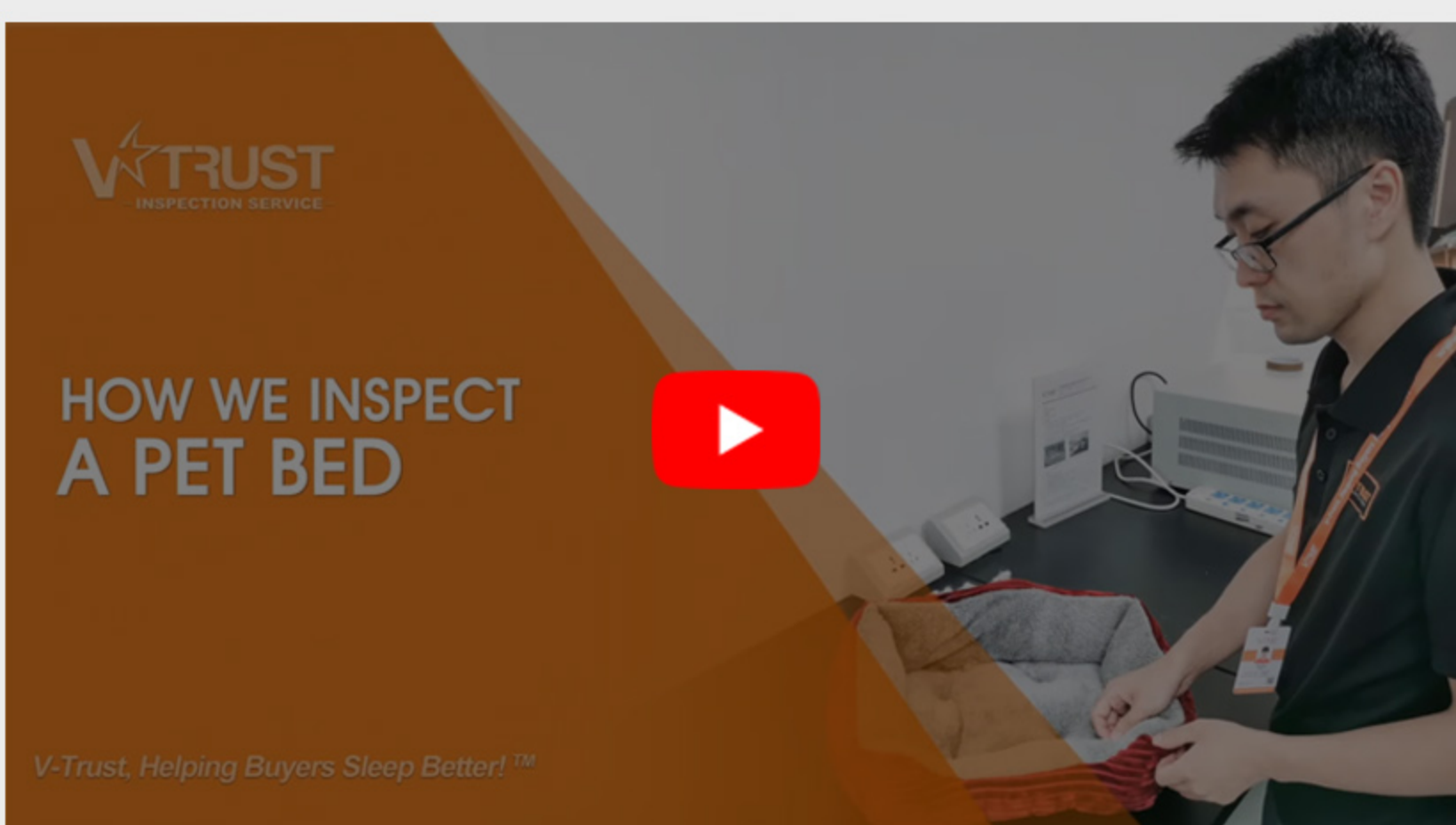
At the end of the program, our Young Leaders endured a running competition where the real winner was in fact everyone who took part.

The next generation of V-Trust Leaders are up to much more! Stay tuned!



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