



A SIGN OF QUALITY  
THE OVGW QUALITY MARK

# Quality, confidence and safety

## The OVGW Quality Mark



The provision of gas and drinking water are highly sensitive aspects of the work of public utilities. The products provided thus need to fulfil exacting requirements in terms of safety and quality of provision as well as offering operational security and long product life.

### **Certification of product quality**

National quality marks aligned with domestic requirements are awarded in many EU member states to protect standards. In Austria, the Austrian Association for Gas and Water (OVGW) established binding standards in the form of the OVGW Quality Mark in the early 1950s.

In contrast to the CE Mark, which represents only a “technical passport” and not quality certification, the OVGW Quality Mark represents confirmation that sustainable quality and safety are valued by the producer to the extent of allowing the product to be assessed by an independent certification body according to pre-defined criteria.

### **Approved assessment guidelines**

Assessment guidelines produced by the OVGW form the basis for the awarding of the Quality Mark.

The **OVGW assessment guidelines** set the standards for approved products and define uniform requirements that go far beyond the standards of harmonized EU norms. The specialist knowledge provided by experts

involved in certification ensures that the experiences of both producers and users are taken into account in specific assessment and certification procedures.

Continual updating in line with advancement in scientific knowledge and experience of practical application ensures that the Quality Mark reflects the current state of the art.

### **Assessment by an independent authority**

The **comprehensive assessment and certification procedure** to obtain the OVGW Quality Mark is determined by the OVGW as an independent certification body authorized by the Austrian Law on Accreditation and monitored by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour.

The procedure entails an initial assessment and regular inspection assessments in line with the relevant assessment guidelines. Assessment and inspection of products, which form the basis for the awarding of the Quality Mark, are undertaken by OVGW assessment laboratories. The award of the OVGW Quality Mark depends upon positive evaluation by the OVGW Certification Advisory Councils.

# The Philosophy behind the Mark: Valuing quality, a holistic approach and continuity



In practical terms, recent experience of certification has shown that ensuring sustainable usability of products in gas and water supply is dependent upon the fulfilment of **expanded certification criteria**. This has implications both for the scope of assessment criteria and also for the timing of regular inspection assessments.

Because of this, the OVGW does not restrict its inspection activities to the normative requirements concerning

products but goes beyond these in certification and assessment procedures to consider **requirements that are relevant in production, for the user and in an after-sales context**.

Inspection assessments in all these areas are undertaken at pre-defined intervals. The regular inspection of criteria to be fulfilled is crucial to ensuring that **sustainable quality** is achieved.

## The OVGW Quality Mark Contributing to security in Austrian gas and water supply



In Austria, very high standards in terms of products used in gas consumption, gas internal installations and in the gas distribution industry have already been the norm for several decades.

Equally, binding regulations regarding water supply have made the use of acceptable and high-quality materials, construction components and equipment essential. This has particular importance given the excellence of Austrian

water and the high standards of Austrian water supply. Both suppliers and consumers continue to estimate national standards that are far above the purely technical minimum requirements set out in EU guidelines.

The Austrian Association for Gas and Water meets these demands in terms of safety and proven quality through the awarding of the **OVGW Quality Mark – Gas** and the **OVGW Quality Mark – Water**.

# The OVGW Quality Mark guarantees:



## ■ **Industry rules and developments**

Ensuring that a product conforms to industry rules and represents the state of the art is achieved through inspection assessments carried out at least once a year. This allows customers buying certified products to have confidence that the product conforms to current technical knowledge and developments.

## ■ **Acceptability for human consumption of drinking water supplies**

All materials that come into contact with drinking water supplies must conform to the Austrian Food Act (Lebensmittelgesetz). The OVGW Quality Mark provides a guarantee that these conditions have been fulfilled.

## ■ **Usability, operating safety and reliability**

Certified products are distinguished by reliability in operational terms, high user satisfaction and long product life.

## ■ **Austrian distribution partners, German-speaking customer support, guaranteed component supply and construction site service**

The manufacturers and importers of certified products have a customer support service in Austria, offer prompt supply of replacement components and guarantee the availability of specific products over a period of at least 10 years.

## ■ **Regulated user information**

Certified products are supplied complete with instructions regarding installation, maintenance and usage in German language.

## ■ **Optimal deployment in accordance with OVGW guidelines and Austrian law**

The OVGW Quality Mark provides confirmation that certified products can be optimally deployed and that the relevant provisions of Austrian law are adequate.

*The OVGW Quality Mark provides special certification for gas appliances:*

## ■ **Suitability for the Austrian market**

The appliance has been tested and complies with the requirements regarding gas quality and gas pressures stipulated in the EC Gas Appliances Directive and the Austrian Gas Appliance Safety Regulation (GSV).

## ■ **Efficient energy usage**

Emission levels and efficiency ratings comply with relevant Austrian national regulations. Particular importance is attached to low emissions and high efficiency levels.

## ■ **Ease of installation, maintenance and operation**

The appliance is particularly easy to install and maintain and offers modern convenience in terms of regulation and operation. The appliance can be installed quickly and simply by the installer and can be operated with ease by the customer. Installation regulations of the OVGW TR-Gas and all building inspection provisions can be fulfilled without additional actions being taken.

## ■ **Flue inspection performed simply and quickly on the basis of the data catalogue produced by the OVGW**

# Benefits of the OVGW Quality Mark



The OVGW Quality Mark is a multifunctional quality label that offers advantages to all participants in the supply chain, from product manufacturers, suppliers, official bodies, trade and commerce to customers.

## Quality certification

The OVGW Quality Mark:

- distinguishes the product from lower quality products,
- confirms that the product represents the state of the art through assessment by an independent body,
- certifies that the product is produced under inspected conditions and confirms high industrial standards (e.g. ISO 9001 certification),
- removes the need for supplier companies to undertake their own regular time and cost intensive test procedures,
- minimizes the need for provision of additional information in terms of verification and certification,
- can function as fulfilment of requirements related to safety and functional reliability,
- vouches for care taken during product selection by those responsible,
- can function as important evidence for recovery claim in the event of damage,
- guarantees replacement part supply, customer service and competent support service where problems arise,
- ensures high quality standards in Austrian gas and water supply,
- stands for optimal use of resources and adherence to high environmental standards.

## Legal significance

The certification of a product offers significant advantages in the event of judicial or administrative proceedings. In most such cases the use of certified products is viewed as a sign of a certain degree of quality by investigating court or administrative authorities: in the case of civil claims for damages, it may be harder for the person seeking damages to provide evidence of illegality and culpability on the part of a company that has used a certified product; in administrative penal procedures, on the other hand, it may be easier for the company having used certified products to provide proof to the relevant authorities that it has committed no illegal or culpable actions. Furthermore, it is generally the case that expert witnesses, should they be required, refer in their reports to the stipulations of the OVGW.

It should therefore be noted that the certification of products or services, although it does not automatically confer exemption from liability or culpability, is consistently able to improve the situation of companies involved in actual cases of litigation that have used certified products. This may provide advantages that in some legal cases prove decisive.

# Further information



## Conditions for the awarding of the OVGW Quality Mark

Information concerning the awarding of the OVGW Quality Mark can be obtained from the following address:

OVGW – Certification  
Schubertring 14, 1010 Vienna,  
Tel: +0043 – (0)1 – 5131588 – 0  
E-mail: [office@ovgw.at](mailto:office@ovgw.at)  
[www.ovgw.at](http://www.ovgw.at)

## Products with the OVGW Quality Mark

Information about certified products can be found on the OVGW website, which lists all those products awarded a valid OVGW Quality Mark.

<http://www.ovgw.at/zert/themen>

## The OVGW Quality Mark has a new design

As part of a move to strengthen the public image of the OVGW, the OVGW Quality Mark for product certification has been redesigned. The Quality Mark now has a more contemporary design that reflects the overall corporate design of the Association. It is important to note, however, that the changes have only affected the appearance of the Quality Mark and have no impact upon its “content”. The OVGW Quality Mark continues to vouch for products that have been subject to rigorous and independent inspections and that reflect the state of the art.

**1 January 2007** is the launch date, when the “new” Quality Mark replaces the long-serving former design with a new rectangular form.

The change has no implications for all products certified during the period up to 31 December 2006 or for those already certified and in use. The “old” Quality Mark continues to have full validity beyond 31 December 2006.



### Credits:

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