The Carpet and Rug Institute, Inc.

Seal of Approval
Program Manual

Developed by

CRI™

THE CARPET AND RUG INSTITUTE

100 S. Hamilton St.
Dalton, Georgia 30720
(706) 278-3176

Or Visit the CRI Website
www.carpet-rug.org
© The Carpet and Rug Institute, Inc.
2020 – All rights reserved

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) is the national trade association for the carpet and rug industry. Its members are manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers, representing over 90% of all carpet produced in the United States. In addition to the North American members, there are a growing number of overseas participants. CRI works as a partner with the carpet industry to supply science-based information and insight into how carpet and rugs can create a better environment for living, working, and learning.

This Program Manual outlines the internal quality and operating procedures of the CRI Seal of Approval program. The purpose of this manual is to establish the procedures to maintain the highest level of quality and to ensure continuity and consistency by monitoring the overall process on a continuing basis. As the certification body, CRI is responsible for the implementation and supervision of the procedures in this manual and other program documents.

CRI is committed to be a source of extensive science-based information for consumers, writers, interior designers, specifiers, facility managers, architects, builders, building owners and managers, installation contractors, and retailers. This commitment includes dedication to quality excellence and continuous improvement in administering product testing programs. Quality, impartiality, integrity, and accuracy are cornerstones of CRI certification programs.

1. GENERAL

  1.1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

   The CRI Seal of Approval (SOA) program is the testing program for carpet cleaning products and equipment. Proper carpet cleaning and maintenance is paramount to the carpet product experience. The SOA program exists to ensure consumers, both residential and commercial, know they are using products that meet the carpet manufacturer's specification for cleaning and maintenance.

  1.2. DOCUMENTED LEGAL IDENTITY

   The Carpet and Rug Institute, Inc. is a registered corporation in the State of Georgia. CRI is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States government as a 501(c) (6) entity. CRI is a national trade association with membership open to all corporations, persons, and partnerships engaged in the manufacture of carpet, rugs, cushions, adhesives, and floor covering related products.

  1.3. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

   The policies and procedures under which the CRI SOA program operates do not discriminate against applicants to ensure high quality results in certification. CRI shall make its certification program available to all member and non-member applicants whose activities fall within the scope of CRI activities, regardless of their size, and the number of other certifications held. There will be no undue financial or other conditions.

  1.4. ACCESS POLICY

   CRI's services are available to all applicants whose activities fall within the carpet cleaning and maintenance industries. Access is not conditional upon the size of the applicant or membership of any association or group, nor is certification conditional upon the number of certificates already issued.

  1.5. CRITERIA

   The criteria for SOA certification are available and are outlined on The Carpet and Rug Institute website (http://www.carpet-rug.org).

  1.6. SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

   CRI limits its requirements and decisions on certification to those matters specifically defined by the CRI SOA program.

  1.7. CONTINUED COMPLIANCE

   Changes (whether intentional or unintentional) to the product, formulation, or manufacture of the product must be reported to the CRI.

1.8. FURTHER INFORMATION

CRI ensures that the staff are free from commercial, financial, and other pressures which might influence the results of the certification process. All persons contracted by CRI to perform duties or services related to the SOA program must commit and attest that they are free from commercial pressures by signing the CRI Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Financial Disclosure Policy document.

The Participation Agreement, submitted by an applicant, gives CRI the right to perform testing. The applicant's rights, consent, and responsibilities for testing are detailed in the Participation Agreement.

A directory of certified products is available at all times on the CRI website (http://www.carpet-rug.org). Only currently certified and valid products will be listed.

1.9. USE OF THE SERVICE MARK

1.9.1. The CRI exercises control over ownership, use, and display of marks of conformity including logos and labels and their usage by participants. Incorrect references to the certification system or misleading use may be dealt with at the discretion of the CRI up to and including decertification or other legal remedies. Additionally, the uses of said logos and labels are addressed in the Brand Standards and Standards Guides.

1.9.2. A participant, whose product(s) meets the criteria for certification in the SOA program, shall be entitled to use of the Service Mark in the manner outlined below. The participant shall be responsible for maintaining compliance of certified products. The use of the terms "Logo" and "Label" are interchangeable with "Service Mark" for the purpose of this document unless otherwise specified.

Specifications – CRI shall have the sole right to determine or approve the Service Mark design, its mode of intended application, or to permit the manufacture or affixation of the Label at any participant's request. The CRI SOA Brand Standards and Standards Guides specify the approved forms of use.

Presentation – The participant shall use the Service Mark (with the assigned SOA Certification ID) or logo only as authorized by the SOA program and more specifically defined in the Brand Standards and Standards Guides.

Quality Assurance – Upon request, the participant shall make available all records regarding application of the Service Mark, use of the Service Mark, and the product/packaging on which the Service Mark is used. The CRI reserves the right to conduct unannounced inspections of the Service Mark as used on products for purposes of ensuring the correct presentation and use on certified products only.

Non-transferability – The Service Mark shall not be transferred to any other entity, product type, or product style other than those registered with CRI.

Usage – Once approved for use, the participant may use the Service Mark for the specific product certified as long as product remains certified and the participant remains in good standing. Private label usage is available upon authorization by the parent product participant and subsequent registration and verification by CRI.

Print and Other Media – The Service Mark may be used or referenced in the participant's advertising and marketing materials for the specific certified product. This shall include, but is not limited to, printed materials, shipping cartons, brochures, newspapers, magazines, television, the Internet, displays, billboards, and non-visual advertising such as radio. Additional uses may be authorized through written permission by CRI.

Reference to Certified Products Only – The Service Mark may only be used to identify certified products and may not be used in such a manner as to infer or claim certification on products that are not certified. General claims of SOA program compliance or use of the Service Mark to infer SOA program compliance across any portion of a participant's product lineup may not be made directly or by appearance. The participant shall have sole responsibility, and shall take all steps necessary, to ensure that only the certified products are marked or identified with the Service Mark.

Regulatory Requirements – All advertising and/or displays which utilize or make reference to the Service Mark shall be presented in a manner that complies with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Deceptive or Misleading Use – The participant is responsible for ensuring that the presentation, content, and context of the displayed Service Mark is not deceptive or misleading in any manner. Deceptive or misleading usage of the Service Mark must be corrected immediately. Incorrect, misleading, or improper uses of the Service Mark or references to the certification may be dealt with at the discretion of the CRI up to and including decertification or other legal remedies.

Surveillance of the Service Mark – CRI shall periodically review marked products to ensure the correct use of the Service Mark.

1.10. ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY, OBJECTIVITY, AND IMPARTIALITY

CRI does not:

1. Supply or design products of the type it evaluates
2. Advise or provide consultancy services to the applicant as to methods of dealing with barriers to the certification requested
3. Provide any other products or services that could compromise the confidentiality, objectivity, or impartiality of its evaluation processes and decisions
4. Those participating in certification commit themselves to:
5. Comply with the rules defined by CRI, including those relating to confidentiality and independence from commercial and other conflicts of interests
6. Declare any prior or present association on their part or on the part of their employer with a supplier or designer of products related to the evaluation or certification to which they are to be assigned
7. Contracted personnel are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement
8. CRI personnel will not be permitted to review or make a certification decision on a product for which they have provided consultancy for a period of two years from time the consultancy was provided.

2. ADMINISTRATION

2.1. COMPETENCE

SOA personnel are competent for the functions they perform, including making required technical judgments, framing policies, and implementation of the program. SOA administrative personnel will demonstrate their ability to perform consistently at a high level for each assigned function.

2.2. SOA ROLES

In accordance with the authorities and responsibilities assigned in this section, the management duties and tasks shall be accomplished as follows:

PRODUCT PERFORMANCE & STANDARDS PANEL (PP&S)

The PP&S Panel is responsible for oversight of the technical programs of CRI, including the Seal of Approval program. These responsibilities also include informing the CT Leader and SOA Program Manager on matters affecting confidence in the program (including openness and public perception) to initiate appropriate action.

CERTIFICATION TEAM (CT) LEADER

The CT Leader is responsible for approving certification for initial and periodic tests, reporting program management activities to the PP&S, and executing the directives of the PP&S.

SOA PROGRAM MANAGER

The SOA Program Manager is responsible for reviewing the test data to ensure program compliance as well as issuing, granting, or withdrawing certification. The Program Manager is also responsible for the operation of the SOA program. Additional responsibility for reporting to top management, PP&S, on any need for improvement. The program manager is also responsible for reviewing all financial and administrative functions of the program such as ensuring invoices (payable and receivable), receipts, customer correspondence, and public information are accomplished correctly and in a timely manner.

IT DIRECTOR

The IT Director is responsible for ensuring computer network security, backup and disaster recovery per the CRI Disaster Recovery Plan. Backed up files are protected in a media safe on premises and at an off-site repository.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER (CFO)

The CFO is responsible for managing financial resources and ensuring approved budgets are adhered to. The CFO also ensures that adequate financial resources are available to support ongoing program operations.

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

The Communications Manager is responsible for ensuring the development and execution of communication materials for the organization's initiatives.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for supporting the SOA personnel with coordination of program documentation.

PERSONNEL RESOURCES

The President of CRI ensures that the SOA program has qualified personnel, by virtue of education and/or experience, available for performing certification functions related to the type, range, and volume of work performed.

2.3. CONTRACTED LABORATORY

Professional Testing Laboratory Inc. (PTL) is the contracted laboratory for the SOA program.

> Professional Testing Laboratory Inc.
> 714 Glenwood Place
> Dalton, Georgia 30721
> Phone: 706.226.3283

3. POLICY

3.1. ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS

The SOA program tests and certifies carpet cleaning products and equipment. The program categories are as follows:

Solutions	Solutions include pre-spray, in-tank, spotter, encapsulate, and pet stain and odor remover categories.
Vacuum Cleaners	Vacuums include household and commercial categories.
Interim Maintenance Systems	Interim maintenance is a form of extraction for commercial carpet that is to be used between vacuuming and deep cleaning or restoration.
Deep Cleaning Extractors	Deep cleaning extractors include truck mount, self-contained, and portable categories.
Deep Cleaning Systems	Deep Cleaning Systems are a system typically made of an extractor and solution combination along with accessories.

3.2. TESTING REQUIREMENTS

    3.2.1. All products submitted for testing shall be testing according to their correct test method in the following tables. The testing schedule is listed below as well. All test methods are available for review on the CRI website (www.carpet-rug.org).

Test Methods

Solutions	Test Method
Spot Remover	TM 110
Pre-spray and In-tank	TM 111
Pet Stain and Odor Remover	TM 116
Encapsulate	TM 123

Deep Cleaning	Test Method
Deep Cleaning Extractors	TM 118
Deep Cleaning Systems	TM 119 and TM 120

Interim Maintenance	Test Method
Interim Maintenance Systems	TM 121 and TM 122

Vacuums	Test Method
Vacuums	TM 112, TM 113, TM 114, and TM 115

Schedule

Initial	Initial tests are required for entry into the SOA program.
Periodic	Periodic tests are required for continued certification in the SOA program. Following initial certification, periodic tests occur once every 4 years for solutions and once every 4 years for equipment.

3.3. PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION

Upon approval by the appropriate entities, CRI will administer changes to the SOA program and necessary documents. After all official changes are completed, the most up-to-date versions of all manuals and documents will be available on the CRI website.

3.4. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The CT maintains all SOA program documents, including the Program Manual, Participation Agreements, registration forms, and fee schedule.

3.5. CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR CERTIFICATION

All conditions and procedures for certification are addressed under the PROCESS section of this document.

Test results are confidential and are not to be distributed outside of the participant or CRI.

3.6. CERTIFICATION RIGHTS AND DUTIES

SOA CT provides a description of the rights and duties of certification applicants, including requirements for restrictions or limitations on the use of the program's Service Mark. The Participation Agreements, Brand Standards, and Standards Guides cover these rights and duties.

3.7. REVISION OF PROGRAM DOCUMENTS

PP&S approval is required for substantive and material changes to the program. Minor changes, such as grammar and spelling corrections, will not require PP&S approval.

3.8. PROGRAM DOCUMENTS FORMAT

SOA program documents will be maintained electronically.

Documents will be given a descriptive name. Each document will have header or footer information that states:

1. Document name
2. Version number
3. Date

3.9. SECURITY OF DOCUMENTATION

All documents are maintained electronically and securely.

3.10. CORRECTIVE ACTION AND PROGRAM CHANGES

In the event that a process or function of the program is detected that does not conform to the policies and procedures of this document, the SOA administrative personnel will implement appropriate corrective action in a timely manner.

All participants will be notified of changes in the program structure or function at the discretion of PP&S.

4. PROCESS

4.1. NEW APPLICATIONS

The SOA Program Manager, or designee, provides applicants with an application packet including the Participation Agreement that contains a detailed description of program requirements.

Application to the program is accomplished by completion of the Participation Agreement and the Product Registration form. These two documents together comprise the application process. The product registration ensures that the scope of certification sought by the applicant is available within the guidelines of the program and that the applicant grants permission for the testing of products for purposes of program compliance.

4.2. ACCOUNTING PROCESS

The SOA Program Manager will send a request to the CRI accounting department to generate an invoice for the new product. All invoices must be paid before any product may be submitted to the laboratory for testing.

After the payment has been received, the SOA Program Manager will generate a chain of custody form for the product.

4.3. TESTING

The laboratory will conduct testing of the submitted product and issue a finding based on the established criteria. The SOA Program Manager is notified of these findings and reviews the data to ensure that the correct results are recorded and passed along to the applicant. The CT Leader makes the decision on certification. The SOA Program Manager is responsible for furnishing this report to the participant along with a letter stating the status of certification. Letters notifying participants of deficiencies will detail requirements to correct the deficiency.

4.4. PRODUCT SUBMISSION

All products submitted for testing must be tested in the manner as they are directed by the manufacturer. No special treatment, formulation, or handling of the product is permitted. Any misleading or similarly deceitful effort regarding testing will be dealt with by decertification or denial from entry into the program.

4.5. CHAIN OF CUSTODY

All products require a Chain of Custody form prior to testing. Information on the Chain of Custody will include test information, product information, and laboratory information.

4.6. PACKAGING AND SHIPPING

Product shall be carefully packaged in a container suitable for shipment so that the contents will not be damaged during shipment. Products that are unable to be shipped via carrier (e.g. truck-mounted extraction systems) may be accepted by the lab with prior approval by CRI.

4.7. LABORATORY REPORT

4.7.1. LABORATORY IDENTIFICATION

Name, address, phone number, and other contact information for the laboratory.

4.7.2. MANUFACTURER, PRODUCT, AND PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION

Manufacturer information, Product information, and SOA Chain of Custody ID.

4.7.3. TEST RESULTS

All test reports will include the following information for specific program category.

Vacuums - Soil Removal, Emissions Analysis, Appearance Change, and Power Use Effectiveness

Solutions - Cleaning Efficacy, Resoiling, Lightfastness, pH, and Optical Brighteners

Deep Cleaning Systems - XRF Cleaning Equipment Assessment, Residual Moisture, Resoiling Propensity Assessment, Colorfastness Assessment, pH, Optical Brighteners, and Surface Appearance Change

Deep Cleaning Extractors - XRF Cleaning Equipment Assessment, Residual Moisture, Resoiling Propensity Assessment, Colorfastness Assessment, pH, Optical Brighteners, and Surface Appearance Change

Interim Maintenance Systems - Cleaning Equipment Assessment, Resoiling Propensity Assessment, Colorfastness Assessment, pH, Optical Brighteners, and Surface Appearance Change

4.7.4. CERTIFICATION OF THE REPORT

All test reports will be signed by senior laboratory personnel, or designee.

4.8. CERTIFICATION

4.8.1. PASSING PRODUCTS, FAILING PRODUCTS, AND RETESTING

Participants will be notified of products found to be in compliance with the SOA program.

SOA personnel shall issue a certificate in conjunction with new or renewed certifications. Participants may forward copies of this certificate to clients provided that the certificate is provided in its entirety as issued and currently displayed by the CRI. Modifications to the certificate are not allowed.

Upon notification of failure, a participant may select to retest a product or withdraw. A retest requires a new Chain of Custody, invoice, and payment to proceed.

4.9. SUSPENSION AND DECERTIFICATION

Suspension and decertification are actions taken to ensure a product is in compliance with all program requirements. Each status has individual conditions for the transition of the status.

SUSPENSION

Suspension relates to a violation of terms of the SOA program or a first-time test failure of a certified product in which a product is removed from the certified products list on the CRI website.

DECERTIFICATION

Decertification relates to products which have failed to meet testing requirements for a second consecutive time or continued violation(s) of SOA program rules (e.g. incorrect use of service mark) and complete removal from the SOA program.

4.10. CHANGES TO PRODUCT

The participant is required to submit notification of changes of a product (e.g. changes in chemistry or function) to SOA personnel.

4.11. PRIVATE LABELING

Participants may elect to private label certified products in the SOA program. The participant of the parent product must submit a Private Label Participation Agreement naming the private label participant. All parties must endorse the Private Label Participation Agreement.

The SOA Program Manager will verify that the participant's parent product is actively certified in the SOA program. CRI accounting personnel will then send an invoice to the participant of the parent product and they shall pay the invoice or forward it to participant of the private label.

The private label SOA certificate number will be valid and remain listed on the CRI website as long as the parent product continues to meet SOA program criteria. Suspension or decertification of the parent product will cause the private label product to be removed from the CRI website.

4.12. POLICIES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

4.12.1. COMPLAINTS

Any participant may submit a complaint in writing to CRI.

Impartiality will be assured to all complainants through the process. Included in the grounds for complaint, the complainant shall list any persons who may have potentially compromised impartiality in the process. Any persons determined to have potentially compromised impartiality will be recused.

4.12.2. APPEALS

A participant may present an appeal on a motion or ruling of the SOA program by submitting the grounds for appeal in writing to CRI. At the conclusion of the appeals process, CRI will send a written correspondence to the appellant explaining the outcome of the appeal.

Impartiality will be assured to all appellants through the appeals process. Included in the grounds for appeal, the appellant shall list any persons who may have potentially compromised impartiality in the appeal process. Any persons determined to have potentially compromised impartiality will be recused.

ANNEX

Definitions

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT	Specified requirement, including product requirements, that are fulfilled by the participant as a condition of establishing or maintaining certification.
SOA CERTIFICATION ID	A unique number assigned to a certified product in the SOA program.
IMPARTIALITY	The presence of objectivity existing so that conflicts of interest do not exist or are resolved so as to not adversely influence the activities of the Certification Body. Impartiality is demonstrated through independence, freedom from conflicts of interest, freedom from bias, freedom from prejudice, neutrality, fairness, open-mindedness, even-handedness, detachment, and balance.
INITIAL TEST	The first test upon for certification in the Seal of Approval program.
PARENT PRODUCT	A participant's tested and certified product that may be identified under a private label certification for an additional authorized participant.
PARTICIPANT	The organization responsible to CRI for ensuring that certification requirements, including product requirements, are fulfilled.
PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT	SOA Participation Agreement executed by CRI and the participating company that establishes the legal basis for the relationship between CRI and the Participant.
PRIVATE LABEL	A product that has received a private label certification and a separate SOA Certification ID based upon the parent product's certification.
PRIVATE LABEL PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT	SOA Private Label Participation Agreement executed by CRI and the participating company that establishes the legal basis for the relationship between CRI, the Participant, and Private Labeler.
PRIVATE LABELING	The process of applying a second, unique SOA Certification ID to a SOA-certified product.
PROGRAM CATEGORY	A group of products for testing in the SOA program (i.e. vacuums, solutions, interim maintenance systems, deep cleaning systems, and deep cleaning extractors).
PRODUCT REQUIREMENT	A requirement that relates directly to a product, specified in standards or in other documents identified by CRI.

PERIODIC TEST   A test performed for each current participant for continued certification in the SOA program.

SERVICE MARK   A legally registered name or designation used in the manner of a trademark.

SURVEILLANCE   Inspection of marked products to ensure correct use of service marks.