INTRODUCTION

There is no higher honor in sports than the gold medal. All of the athletes competing in the Summer Games have one goal, to win a gold medal for their country.

The gold medal is the highest standard. It is a mark of excellence.

When it comes to the water treatment industry, gold is also a mark of excellence. Through our Gold Seal Product Certification Program, Water Quality Association offers a scientific method to assure the safety and efficacy of the devices consumers are purchasing.

We provide an independent seal of approval on a variety of products, which is awarded only after rigorous laboratory tests, literature review and material assessments have been completed.

This e-book provides an overview into the program and the process involved in getting products certified. You will learn the benefits of certification and the areas of product certification in order to move forward with the process.
THE CASE FOR CLEAN WATER

Safe, clean water is key to life. Water has so many health benefits that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day.

Unfortunately, bad water can have serious health consequences. Some studies link high levels of lead in drinking water to delays in physical and mental development, short attention spans, and learning difficulties in children.

There’s also evidence that arsenic in drinking water can lead to nerve, heart, skin, and blood vessel damage. And Cryptosporidium is responsible for potentially life-threatening diarrhea.

The media are filled with stories about contaminated water. The problems in Flint, Michigan have been widely reported. In June, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the results of its investigation into the lead contamination in the Flint water supply.

The findings indicated that blood lead levels (BLLs) were significantly higher among young children when the source of the water supply was switched to the Flint River, without appropriate corrosion control measures, than when the source of water was the Detroit water system.

However, the CDC also found that water filters distributed by the State of Michigan, and third-party certified, were effective in removing lead or reducing it to levels under the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion.
Water Quality Association supported President Barack Obama for the remarks he made on May 4 during his visit to Flint. President Obama assured residents that their water is safe for consumption as long as a water filter is used correctly.

“… Right now, it is safe for you to install a filter in your home, or to use a standalone filter and to go ahead and drink that water,” President Obama stressed.

“But you got to use it. And it’s available to you—for free.”

FLINT IS NOT ALONE
The problems in Flint are not unique. Numerous communities across the United States are negatively impacted by the presence of naturally occurring or man-made contaminants in their water sources.

Studies indicate nearly all the lead in users’ tap water is a result of corrosion from materials containing lead coming into contact with water through the delivery infrastructure.

Lead can leach into the water supply from service line connections, from lead solder used in copper piping, and from brass fixtures. With a vast distribution system, the potential for chemical or microbial contaminants to enter the water is very real.

For example, a recent study from the National Cancer Institute looked at arsenic in New England ground water, Iowa is addressing nitrates, and the western states have taken steps to protect their drinking water during the continued drought.

This is why WQA urges residents concerned about their water to get their water tested by a certified water testing laboratory, consult with a
certified water treatment professional, and, when selecting a water treatment solution, look for certified products with validated claims.

**WQA’S GOLD SEAL PRODUCT CERTIFICATION**
Finding quality products in a marketplace flooded with options can be challenging. How can you tell if a product is safe, reliable, durable and capable of meeting the claims made on its packaging and literature?

WQA's Certified Product Listings are available to help connect consumers with water treatment products that have been tested and certified to industry standards.

WQA's Gold Seal Product Certification Program ensures that the product is constructed or formulated from safe materials, the claims listed on the packaging are backed by test data, and the product will hold up under normal usage conditions.

**WATCH A SHORT VIDEO ON WQA’S GOLD SEAL PRODUCT CERTIFICATION**
WQA maintains a complete listing of all products and components that have earned the Gold Seal and Sustainability Marks. Only products that pass the rigorous testing requirements of industry standards, pass annual manufacturing facility audits, and comply with WQA's Certification Schemes can be found on our web site.

**BENEFITS OF PRODUCT CERTIFICATION**

**Peace of Mind**

WQA Certification provides end users, retailers and regulators the benefit of knowing that an accredited third party has evaluated not only a product’s capability of passing rigorous testing according to industry standards, but that the process in which certified products are made is reproducible. This process allows users the peace of mind that a company is continuously monitored and can only maintain certification if their manufacturing process remains consistent.

**Multi-faceted Certification**

Not only are the products tested extensively to evaluate things such as the structural integrity, the product’s ability to reduce contaminants and the safety of the materials that come into contact with water, but the literature is also reviewed to ensure that it does not deceive consumers with any false claims or information.

**Buying Power**

A certified product bears a distinguished Mark indicating that the product has undergone evaluation and testing to verify that the product will perform as the certified claims indicate and/or that the product won’t leech harmful contaminants into the drinking water. The Gold Seal and Sustainability Mark provide consumers a very simple way to recognize products that will perform the way the packaging indicates it will.
Consumer Protection

There is no doubt that the infrastructure for most municipalities is old and requires billions of dollars of upgrades. While the facilities themselves provide water that in many cases exceeds drinking water requirements, the path to the end user is not always as exemplary.

Final Barrier is a solution to this problem. Certified products allow for consumers to target the specific contaminant issues with confidence that the product does what it claims it will do.

Regulatory Requirements

Some states or local cities have specific regulations in place that require certification for the ability to sell legally in that jurisdiction. CA has passed new legislation that will require an ANSI accredited certifier issue certification to products making health claims before they can be legally sold in CA. If a product is certified by WQA, you can be assured that it will also be safe for purchase in California.

Monitoring Consistency

WQA’s programs do not issue certification and allow for that certification to remain untouched indefinitely. The programs conduct annual inspections to verify that the products being manufactured are not only being consistently made, but are made in the same way as the product was built when it underwent testing and evaluation.
GOLD SEAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Initial Inquiry: The first step in the process is to contact the WQA regarding product certification through the Gold Seal Certification Program. A representative from the Business Development division will answer any questions you may have.

You will be asked a series of questions that will provide WQA with the information needed to prepare an accurate quote. Be prepared to share specific contaminant-reduction claims, flow rates, capacities and general product specifications for your system. Contact us at (630) 505-0160 or goldseal@wqa.org.

Application: Once you have received the cost estimate and have made the decision to proceed with certification, you will be asked to fill out an application agreement, as well as a data sheet and wetted parts list for the products that you would like to submit for certification.

After the completed forms have been received by WQA, your business development representative will assign a project manager to you. Your project manager will then assist you with the remaining steps needed to be taken in order to complete the certification process.

Product Testing: The product will undergo rigorous testing* to ensure compliance with the standard to which it is being certified.

*Download a PDF of Tips to Help Pass Product Testing

Literature Review: The product’s installation manual, performance data sheet, and data label will be evaluated for specific requirements set forth by standard guidelines.

Facility Audit: Facility audits will be conducted on an annual basis. The production of your certified products will be evaluated to ensure that the products being marketed are the same products that were tested and certified. WQA will also review your quality process and make sure that the Gold Seal is being properly applied to certified...
products only. These audits also maintain consistent communication between the WQA and you throughout the certification period.

**Certification:** Once the product has completed and passed all of the necessary testing, the file will be reviewed and a decision on certification will be made. If all requirements of the standard have been achieved, certificates will be issued to you, along with all test data. Upon certification, a product is able to bear the WQA Gold Seal.

The use of the Seal is described in the Gold Seal Logo Policy. Confirmation of certification can be found on the WQA website at [https://www.wqa.org/find-products - /](https://www.wqa.org/find-products)

* WQA owns and operates a state-of-the-art product testing laboratory, which most clients seeking certification choose. However, the Association also allows client companies to use alternative laboratories, known as technical service providers (TSPs) for their product testing. Test data received from WQA-approved TSPs is considered equal to data produced by the Association’s own laboratory.

**PRODUCT CERTIFICATION AREAS**

Water Quality Association provides various types of certifications to encompass a wide variety of products that may be used in the drinking water pathway. Anything that comes into contact with your drinking water may be a candidate for certification.

Certification is divided up into areas that cover various aspects of water treatment technology. To find out more about a specific certification area that WQA provides services for, please use the links here.

**Drinking Water Treatment Units** - The standards in this area cover full systems that use filter, reverse osmosis, water softener, or ultra violet treatment technology.

**Drinking Water System Components** - These standards cover individual components or parts of water treatment systems.

**Drinking Water Treatment Chemicals** - These standards cover the use of chemicals that are added to drinking water for health or aesthetic effects.
Sustainable Drinking Water Treatment Products - The Sustainability Certification Program recognizes products for improvements in the sustainability of their production facilities and processes.

Low Lead Compliance - The Low Lead compliance standard is a way for companies to show compliance to the EPA's rule of no component in contact with drinking water may contain more than 0.25% lead content.

Food Equipment - The food equipment standards cover the certification of pieces of equipment that come into contact with food or drink related items.

Bottled Water - The bottled water standards cover the certification of water bottle containers.

International Standards - Standards that are only applicable outside the US and Canada are labeled as International Standards.

To see a list of the most current versions of the standards WQA is certifying to, refer to this list of standards.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Product Certification Tip Sheets

Please feel free to download the following tip sheets for your use.

Tips to Help Pass Product Testing
Marks of a First-class Certification Body
5 Key Benefits of Product Certification
The 5 Things You Need to Know About WQA's Gold Seal
6 Tips on How to Fill Out Your Wetted Parts List
SUMMARY
We hope you agree with us on the importance of making sure only certified products are used by consumers to filter their drinking water and why WQA’s Gold Seal Certification process is a must for any product on the market today.

So, we need you to GO FOR THE GOLD!

Begin the process of winning your Gold Seal Product Certification by contacting us today at 630-505-0160 or email us at goldseal@wqa.org.

Learn more at https://www.wqa.org/product-cert

SUSTAINABILITY AND PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION
WQA also offers the first-of-its-kind environmental labeling program for the water treatment industry. Demonstrate leadership in the marketplace on behalf of your company and its products with this unique mark of your expertise.

This certification allows you to promote your environmental achievements on products and literature to retailers and consumers. Learn more here.

In addition, the WQA Professional Certification program helps consumers and employers identify individuals in the point-of-use/point-of-entry water quality improvement industry who have demonstrated a certified level of professional expertise and are dedicated to high professional standards.

If you’re a water treatment professional, the WQA Professional Certification is a must. Learn about how you can become certified.
WQA MEMBERSHIP

If you're not a member, please visit our Membership section to learn about the benefits of joining WQA. If you're ready to join or renew your membership, please click here.

Please share this e-book with a friend or colleague. And, follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
About WQA

Water Quality Association is devoted to treating and delivering clean water. It is the leading voice of the water treatment and purification industry.

WQA primarily represents the sector of the water treatment industry devoted to treating water on the homeowner’s or business owner’s property.

WQA has a vision for water treatment where we are actively improving our world through cleaner water and safer products.

We often refer to this aspect of treatment as the Final Barrier that prevents waterborne contaminants from entering a home or business. Whether your water arrives from a community treatment plant, municipal well or other source, WQA’s member companies are committed to making that water safe and aesthetically pleasing for those who consume or use it.

WQA is a resource and information source, a voice for the industry, an educator of professionals, and laboratory for product testing.

Wga.org