

Understanding Plumbing Codes & Certification Marks

Plumbing Codes

When it comes to plumbing and water systems, there are multiple codes and ordinances that must be followed. Although the majority of plumbing standards are fairly consistent throughout the United States, the various codes are dependent on location—often varying somewhat from state to state, and even from city to city within a state.

The primary plumbing codes adopted and enforced by authorities having jurisdiction are:

- International Plumbing Code (IPC)
Adopted by 30 states statewide and/or locally by jurisdiction
- Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC)
Adopted by 13 states statewide and/or locally by jurisdiction
- National Plumbing Code (NPC)
Adopted by some remaining states and jurisdictions

Plumbing Certification Marks

Certification marks displayed on plumbing products indicate which certifying organization completed the certifying testing. It does not represent the organization that wrote the standard to which the product was tested, or the plumbing code(s) to which it complies.

For example, a testing organization such as CSA or IAPMO can test a product for compliance with a plumbing standard like ASME A112.18.2-2015/CSA B125.2-15. If the product meets the specifications of the standard, the testing company (e.g. CSA, IAPMO) lists the product in its certified product listing and allows the use of their certification mark (e.g. CSA, UPC).

Certification marks should be considered equivalent if tested to the same standard(s). For instance, when the Canadian testing entity CSA tests and certifies plumbing products to U.S.-based standards such as those written by ASSE or ASME, the CSAUS (for the U.S.) or CSACUS (for Canada & U.S.) mark is displayed on the product. CSA certification marks are equivalent in all ways to UPC marks, as they are tested to the same standards, only by different laboratories, and are to be accepted by U.S. and Canadian authorities as equivalent.

Plumbing codes enforced by local authorities do not and cannot require plumbing products to be certified by a specific certifying entity, and subsequently to bear a specific mark, as this would constitute an infringement of free trade. However, plumbing codes can and do require that products be “listed” or “labelled” to a specific standard by an accredited third-party certification body such as CSA or IAPMO.