

THE CPNI PRODUCT EVALUATION PROCESS

A GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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Aim

The aim of this document is to provide guidance to explain how the CPNI evaluation process works. It will cover how a product is selected for evaluation; how a CNI site can influence the evaluation programme; what the manufacturer will provide; the process of Catalogue of Security Equipment (CSE)¹ inclusion and how a CNI site may use the CSE to fulfil the needs of the Operational Requirement (OR).

Background

Part of CPNI’s role is to evaluate security products which are readily available on the open market, known as commercial off-the-shelf (CoTS). Products which are successful in the evaluations are awarded a CPNI PROTECTION grade (Base, Enhanced or High) and/or a CPNI CLASS grade (CLASS 1,2,3,4). Details of how these gradings are reached and what they mean is available in the CPNI Rating Guidance document. Broadly though, PROTECTION Level refers to how well a product will stand up to a forced attack and CLASS refers to the resistance to surreptitious attack. The CPNI Trademark is issued for PROTECTION Level only.

CPNI are regularly asked by both CNI sites and manufacturers “How do I get a product tested?” This document will answer that question.

¹ The CSE is available on the CPNI extranet for authorised users. Non-extranet users may contact CPNI for information if they wish to know more about a product they have seen carrying the CPNI Trademark

Eligibility

To be eligible for evaluation and subsequent inclusion in the CSE a product must be readily available and have a unique product number². Ideally the product will be in general use in the security industry. In some cases products may be required to meet British Standards, European Standards or industry/product specific standards prior to CPNI 'top-up' evaluation. Specific entry requirements will be detailed upon application from the manufacturer. Manufacturers are given the CPNI standard upon request so they know what they are expected to deliver.

Sponsorship

If a CNI site comes across a product they would like to install but it does not appear in the CSE they are able to nominate that product for evaluation. This should be done via the CPNI Sector Advisor. There is no cost to nomination, it is simply a method for the CNI to inform CPNI of products of interest. If there is space available on a particular evaluation programme then the product may be included. It must be pointed out, though, that some (not all) evaluation programmes are fully loaded for the upcoming financial year. This means that any product nominated close to the beginning of the financial year may not be accommodated that financial year – the sooner you nominate, the more likely the evaluation will take place in the next round of testing. However, CPNI are as flexible and accommodating as possible

A number of CPNI evaluations are carried out by third party test houses at the expense of the manufacturer. No sponsorship is required for these products and evaluations tend to happen upon demand.³

Manufacturer Enquiries

Another way that a product can get onto an evaluation is for the manufacturer to present their product themselves. Every year CPNI hold a series of manufacturers' engagement days. This is an opportunity for manufacturers to come along and receive information about evaluations and ask questions of the CPNI/test house team members. Dates are available from CPNI or on the CPNI website www.cpni.gov.uk. Once a manufacturer has expressed interest in presenting a product, CPNI will contact the manufacturer and confirm that the product meets the criteria. A manufacturer's agreement is signed and the product is delivered to the test house. From this point onwards the appointed test house conducts all evaluations/trials.

² In a minority of cases the product will be CPNI specific but will carry a unique product identifier/code

³ Products falling into this category are detailed on CPNI manufacturer engagement days. Manufacturers should contact CPNI for details and dates.

Getting into the CSE

The results of the trials are given to CPNI who make the final judgement on whether a product is entered in the CSE and if so at what grade. This decision is made in consultation with a CPNI-chaired panel of experts from a number of technical authorities, the test house and other government departments. The final decision lies with CPNI. Successful applicants are informed and awarded the CPNI Trademark if applicable⁴.

CPNI make the final decision on evaluated products

Using the CSE

Once a product has been successfully evaluated by CPNI it is entered into the Catalogue of Security Equipment. Often, the CSE entry will contain information about not only the product but how the product is recommended for use. Some products are only assured for use in a particular way or with another specific type of product.

An example would be: barrier mounted PIDS (perimeter intruder detection system) are tested on a particular fence type. Using the PIDS on another fence type would invalidate the CPNI assurance. This information is in the CSE.

It is important that when selecting a product from the CSE a CNI site ensured that what they select meets the OR. It is the responsibility of the site to ensure that the product is what they are looking for. Importantly, the site must take their own steps to ensure that it is fit for their purpose. Unfortunately, CPNI are unable (time and money) to establish how long a product will last. Build quality is looked at from a security perspective but CPNI cannot guarantee how it will perform over a protracted period. **DO YOUR HOMEWORK.**

in using a number of products together (example locking hardware and lock) it should be remembered that both products should have similar CPNI grades and be commensurate with each other. There is no point in spending money on a 'high' lock for use on a 'base' door. A good OR will help with the selection of products.

Additional information should be removed. This will include details such as where and when the product was tested, which standard it was tested to and even the grading.

A contractor only needs to know which products to use and not why they are using those products.

⁴ See the CPNI Trademark Guidance Document available on the CPNI website.

Summary

Products can be included in a CPNI evaluation through a number of routes. The important thing is that all products are tested to CPNI published standards by a CPNI appointed Test House. Some evaluations are CPNI funded, others manufacturer funded. Whatever the route to the CSE, customers can be assured that CPNI have done everything possible to ensure consistency of testing and consistency of grading. The same criteria for grading is applied across all product types. CNI sites and security managers should feel confident that by working with their CPNI advisor and selecting a product from the CSE, they are doing all they can to ensure their site is well protected.

Further Reading

- CPNI Product Rating System Guidance document on CPNI website and extranet
- Guide to Producing Operational Requirements for Security Measures and associated documents on the CPNI website and extranet
- CPNI Trademark Guidance document on the CPNI website and extranet