



Electrical accessories

Information for sellers and distributors

Selling or distributing plugs and similar electrical equipment? Safeguard your customers and their customers — and your own reputation. Look for the BSI Kitemark — **and accept nothing less**

As AMA Research's 'Electrical Accessories Market Report' (2016) makes clear, the UK market for small electrical accessories has been disrupted over recent years by new entrants and cheap imports.

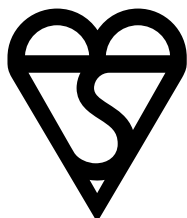
This means it's very important for the sellers and distributors of these products to be vigilant.

How can you know that what you're buying from manufacturers and selling to customers (in either the wholesale or retail trade), meets expected standards and legal requirements?

The answer is to look for the Kitemark symbol, the quality mark introduced by the British Standards Institute (BSI), the world's first national standards body, in 1903.

We've expanded dramatically over recent decades and we now have offices and partner laboratories all over the world.

Whether it's made in Britain or China or elsewhere, a product can qualify for the British Kitemark, and if it does, you'll know there's nothing to worry about.



What's so good about a Kitemarked product?

Kitemarked products are assessed and tested against rigorous standards for safety, performance and reliability. They don't put users at risks — or create hazards. They don't cause electric shocks or catch fire.

What's more, they're made by responsible companies with a demonstrable commitment to quality and safety and to maintaining standards over time. Manufacturers that apply for the Kitemark need to have effective quality-control systems: certification to ISO 9001, the international standard for quality management systems, is often a pre-condition for Kitemark schemes. They also need to 'sign up' for ongoing 'surveillance'. Our assessors return to licensees' premises every two years or so to make sure their standards haven't slipped.

All this makes the Kitemark very different from the CE Mark, which simply claims that your product meets the minimum legal specifications and requires no third-party verification.

The Kitemark has been so successful that it's sometimes specified by customers and, in the case of civil defence contracts in the Middle East, for example, mandated by governments.

Which products can be Kitemarked?

Over the years, we've developed Kitemark schemes for many small electrical accessories, and we continue to expand our range.

Kitemarked products include:

- UK plugs
- UK socket-outlets
- UK socket-outlets with USB charging
- UK adaptors
- Fused Connection Units
- UK conversion plugs
- Cable reels
- Appliance couples
- Switches
- Other accessories (not covered by a published standard)
- Travel adaptors

Wherever you see it, the Kitemark means you can be confident a product has been made well — by a company that puts quality and safety first.

So what exactly am I looking for?

That's a good question because, just like high-end fashion accessories (Gucci handbags etc), Kitemarked electrical accessories can be faked.

The real Kitemark will be professionally stamped and look like this:

It shouldn't have a reverse 'S' or be badly drawn:

These are fakes.



In addition, the licence number on the 'Approved by' stamp should start with the letters KM and consist of five or six numbers, usually between 1 and 9. A series of zeroes means zero — no licence, no certificate, no BSI approval. If you're an appliance manufacturer and distributing small electrical accessories that way, you should also check that

any Kitemarked plugs you're supplied with come with valid certificates from the manufacturer. Any certificate dated earlier than June 2012 is suspect. We re-tested all our certified plugs and re-issued Kitemark certificates when the British Standard BS 1363 was updated in May 2012.

Look for the BSI Kitemark — and accept nothing less



BSI Group
Kitemark Court
Davy Avenue, Knowlhill
Milton Keynes MK5 8PP

T: +44 (0)345 076 5606
F: 01908 814920
bsigroup.com

The trademarks in this material (for example the BSI logo or the word "KITEMARK") are registered and unregistered trademarks owned by The British Standards Institution in UK and certain other countries throughout the world.