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ESCS Recommended Distributor Qualifications

ESCS promotes industry best practices to combat counterfeits and promote quality service from independent distributors of electronic components. We strongly believe every aerospace and military manufacturer should demand at least the following six minimum standards of excellence from their independent distributors.

1. Aerospace AS9120 Certification

If your company is aerospace certified, shouldn't you require your suppliers to maintain the same quality standards for inventory control, split lot traceability and vendor management? Companies with only an ISO 9001 certification should be given a deadline to achieve AS9120 certification or lose their status as an approved supplier.

You can easily view your suppliers' AS9120 certification status on the OASIS database at www.sae.org/OASIS. For all audits completed after October 1, 2008, the IAQG is now requiring certification bodies to upload the latest audit details as well as any corrective action reports with root cause analysis and correction plans, yet it will be up to the distributor to make this data viewable on the OASIS database. All distributors should be required to allow visibility to their scored results for your review. For all audits completed before October 1, 2008, distributors may request their most recent audit information be uploaded for your review.

2. Membership in GIDEP

The Government and Industry Data Exchange Program (GIDEP) provides an important resource for current information on suspect and known counterfeit components, as well as disseminating general information critical to maximizing supply chain efficiency.

3. Membership in ERAI, Inc.

Membership in ERAI, Inc. requires distributors to be in good standing, and provides access to critical information on suppliers and the ERAI's counterfeit component notification database.

4. Validated component testing

Distributors should confirm what testing protocols are required under their quality management system for all components lacking clear pedigree back to the original manufacturer's Certificate of Compliance. Decide whether 3rd party testing should be required or if testing done in-house is acceptable to your standards. If in-house, confirm their inspection staff is qualified by a standard at least as strong as the Independent Distributors of Electronics Association (IDEA) IDEA-STD-1010-A inspection standard, and that on-going compliance with this is documented in their AS9120 Quality Management System.

5. Vendor management system

Confirm your distributor maintains their own approved vendor list, and that their quality management system includes tracking of each supplier's performance for quality and delivery compliance. You may want to ask what the minimum requirements are to add a supplier, and the minimum quality standards they must achieve to remain on the distributor's approved vendor list.

6. Agreement to on-site audits

Every distributor should be required to allow on-site audits by their customers. Whether the manufacturer chooses to do so or not, any distributor who will not agree to at least prospective future audits with minimal notice should be suspect.