



## Industry Communication Best Practices

The most critical aspect of enforcing new appliance standards is clear, effective communication. Without it, market actors, including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and installers will have difficulty complying with the standards, which can result in lost savings. The performance requirements and the State Appliance Standard Database (SASD) certification process will be new to many individuals, so it's important for each state to communicate compliance roles, requirements, and enforcement timelines to impacted market actors.

Appliance standards are intended to transform the market, but the market can only be transformed if market actors comply with the requirements. Redesigning products or adjusting product buying practices may seem burdensome, especially for smaller businesses. If market actors express frustration with the compliance requirements, it is important for states to make them feel heard and assure them of the benefits of complying.

States that have significant resources dedicated to improving compliance still find it challenging to reach everyone in the industry. Some companies may not respond, others may complain, but it is important to recognize that there will always be limitations in outreach. Conferences and industry events are an effective way to reach a large amount of market actors at once.

The key to effective communication with the supply chain is clarity. States should communicate compliance requirements clearly and emphasize the customer benefits. The following sections describe communication best practices across the key market actor categories.

### Manufacturers

#### What to Communicate

- If a manufacturer intends to sell regulated products in your state, their products must meet the respective performance, testing, marking, and certification requirements *prior* to selling or offering the product for sale.
- Explain the meaning of the effective date:
  - o Manufacture by
  - o Sell by
- Explain the consequences of not complying and when enforcement will begin



- Be clear and realistic about when you intend to enforce

### Benefits of State Standards

- Appliance standards save their customers money on their utility bills
- The SASD certification process is relatively straightforward, linking directly with ENERGY STAR where possible, for example.
- Consumers want efficient products

### Additional Considerations

- Timing is very important to manufacturers. Global supply chains, market demands, and competition are major issues faced by manufacturers every day. Regulations such as state standards can be seen as disruptive.
  - It's critical for states to proactively communicate compliance and enforcement timelines. The longer a manufacturer has to understand that a regulation is coming before it goes into effect, the better.
- Many products are manufactured around the globe. In some cases, international manufacturers may be difficult to communicate with directly.
  - If communication with manufacturers is not possible, states should channel communications through distributors and retailers. They can be used as a conduit for information, which can be effective.

### Distributors & Retailers

Distributors and retailers play the same role in the compliance process since they are each responsible for verifying that the products they sell are compliant.

### What to Communicate

- If a retailer or distributor intends to sell regulated products in your state, they must verify that the products they sell are certified to the SASD or the Modernized Appliance Efficiency Database System (MAEDbS) *prior to* selling or offering the product for sale.
- For retailers or distributors that work across state lines, it may be helpful to highlight that several states have or are trying to set standards for the same products. This can help them better plan across their service territory.



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### **Selling Points**

- Consumers want efficient products
- Appliance standards save their customers money on their utility bills
- Since products that meet state standards are widely available, distributors and retailers likely have a lot of compliant products available already, so they don't need to make any drastic changes to their buying processes. However, they should incorporate a compliance verification step to confirm.
- The SASD and MAEDbS have been developed as tools to allow retailers and distributors to search for compliant products.

### **Considerations**

- Distributors and retailers may view product verification as too time consumptive.
  - o States should talk about how user friendly the SASD is and show them where they can find support (either in resources or through a help center).
- Distributors and retailers may also believe that regulatory compliance is the manufacturer's responsibility; often vendor agreements will include a clause to the effect of: "Vendor must comply with all federal, state, and local laws."
  - o States should emphasize the risks of not complying with the standards. Both the manufacturer and the retailer or distributor have a responsibility to comply.



## Installers

Installers play a unique role in the compliance process. In some cases, they may be installing a product already purchased by the end user. In that case, the retailer and manufacturer should have ensured that the product was compliant. In other cases, however, they procure a product that then gets installed in a building, the cost of which is passed down to the building owner. In that case, the installer is responsible for verifying compliance in the SASD or MAEDbS.

### What to Communicate

- If an installer intends to sell regulated products to a customer in your state, the product must be verified as compliant in the SASD or MAEDbS.

### Selling Points

- Consumers want efficient products.
- Appliance standards save their customers money on their utility bills.

### Considerations

- Installers might view product verification as too time consumptive.
  - o States should talk about how user friendly the SASD is and show them where they can find support (either in resources or through a help center).
- Installers might view complying with regulations as the manufacturer, distributor, or retailers' responsibility.
  - o States should tell installers to work with their distributors and suppliers to make sure they're only selling compliant products to the installer.