

**ENVIRONMENTAL RISK MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY
NGA KAIWHAKATUPATO WHAKARARU TAIAO**



A QUICK GUIDE TO

Becoming a Test Certifier

**ERMA NEW ZEALAND
20 Customhouse Quay
P O Box 131
WELLINGTON**

Corner Customhouse Quay and Waring Taylor Street

**Telephone +64 4 916 2426
Facsimile +64 4 916 0433**

Who is a Test Certifier?

Test Certifiers are individuals authorised by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) to issue Test Certificates. The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) legislation sets out when certificates are necessary. They must be provided by an authorised Test Certifier.

What is a Test Certificate and when is one needed?

ERMA NZ sets controls to manage the risk and effect of hazardous substances to prevent harm to people and the environment. Where substances are particularly hazardous certain controls will need checking. The Test Certificate issued by an authorised Test Certifier will verify that these controls have been checked and are being observed. Enforcement agencies will, among other duties, check that appropriate and up-to-date Test Certificates are in place.

Typically, Test Certificates may be required for locations where hazardous substances are stored; for individuals who handle, or supervise the handling of hazardous substances, identified as “Approved Handlers”; and for specific items of equipment such as storage tanks or compressed gas cylinders.

What Qualifications do I Need?

The qualifications and experience needed to become a Test Certifier are set out in the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Personnel Qualifications) Regulations 2001.

A range of background experience and skills are needed including knowledge of the HSNO Act and regulations, and practical experience with hazardous substances, operating equipment and systems. Recent experience in similar work is clearly a benefit. The Test Certifier may seek authorisation for those substances or activities appropriate to their experience and competence.

Test Certifiers will be expected to keep up to date with hazardous substances developments and renew their authority every five years (three years initially).

What Happens Once I Am Authorised?

ERMA New Zealand will maintain a register of approved Test Certifiers; which will also be on our website. Companies or individuals requiring Test Certificates may check the list and engage a Test Certifier for their particular needs. Engagement is a commercial arrangement between the Test Certifier and the individual or organisation requiring the certificate. There are no fees set by ERMA NZ.

What are the benefits of being a Test Certifier?

As a Test Certifier you have a business opportunity to issue statutory Test Certificates that will be on-going. For example, Location Certificates will be required every twelve months, although there is a provision for ERMA to increase this to a maximum of thirty six months if the nature of the hazard and quality of the controls justify an extension. All Approved Handlers will need certificates and these are renewed every five years, although initially when substances are transferred the approved handler may have an option of a certificate for two years.

Test Certificates will be required for some specific items such as packaging, storage tanks gas cylinders and transport of bulk liquid and gases.

How busy will I be?

The amount of work is not dictated by ERMA NZ, it is at the Test Certifier's discretion. The Test Certifier can choose to do as much or as little work as suits. To issue a location certificate will require a visit to the facility, possibly a revisit if there are concerns that need to be addressed. Approved Handlers need not be interviewed and certificates may be issued on the strength of the information they supply.

How big is the market

Location certificates are only required for particularly hazardous class 1 to 5 substances, i.e. explosives; flammable gases, liquids and solids; oxidising agents and peroxides. As a general rule of thumb where a site required a Dangerous Licence in the past it will probably require a location certificate in the future. About 10,000 locations may require certificates.

The legislation requires location certificates be issued by the transfer date of the group of substances to the HSNO legislation. ERMA NZ appreciates that this is not a practical proposition. In addition, the workload of Test Certifier needs to be spread evenly over a year. Arrangements to achieve the desired spread are anticipated.

When class 1 to 5 and 6, 8 and 9 substances, which are toxic, corrosive and ecotoxic are transferred Approved Handlers are expected to number tens of thousands. When the transfer controls are finalised we will have a better idea of the number. Certification needs to be up and running as quickly as possible to achieve a practical spread of certificates we anticipate arrangements to complete the first round of certification to be spread over two years.

How Many Test Certifiers will be needed?

There is no limit on the number of Test Certifiers that ERMA can engage. It is a competitive market. We would predict that some 200 Test Certifiers will be required, spread across the country.

Where are Location Certificates Needed?

Clearly, for locations the Test Certifier needs to be where the hazardous facilities are and these are at the main centres of population.

It would also make sense for Approved Handlers to be approved within the area that they work, however, as the handler need not be interviewed any Test Certifier in the country may issue the test certificate.

The approximate distribution of Test Certifiers across the country for Class 1 to 5 Substances could be:			
North Island	%	South Island	%
Northland	4	East Coast	15
Waikato	11	West Coast	3
Auckland	24	Otago	8
Bay of Plenty	7	Southland	4
Hawkes Bay	4		
Manawatu/Wanganui	8		
Taranaki	4		
Wellington/Wairarapa	8		
Total	70	Total	30

What will I be doing as a Test Certifier?

To provide a Test Certificate you will be contacted directly by the individual or organisation requiring the certificate. Any negotiation or arrangement to undertake the task is between you and the client.

For a location, as you might expect, the extent of the task will vary from classification to classification and site to site. The criteria are set down in the HSNO regulations and ERMA NZ will provide you with guidelines. You will be required to visit the site.

An Approved Handler will have to provide you with advice of their HSNO training and practical experience. You will assess if it meets the requirements and then issue the appropriate certificate including any specific conditions or restrictions that may be necessary. In addition, you will record these details on the ERMA NZ database.

As with any commercial activity you are able to follow up the renewal of certificates, however, engagement remains at the discretion of the client. ERMA will not inform you or the organisation or individual when a new certificate falls due.

What Else Need I know?

ERMA will undertake quality control audits and checks on Test Certifiers to ensure there is a consistent standard of performance.

You will need a level of professional indemnity insurance. ERMA NZ has identified a suitable policy and insurer that you could use, but you could also arrange cover with an insurer of your choice. This is explained in a separate guide.

When agreeing to undertake work for an organisation or individuals you will need to consider whether there are any conflicts of interest. ERMA NZ will provide advice on what is unacceptable.

Other Sources of Information

Additional information is on our website www.ermanz.govt.nz and includes 'Quick Guides', 'Information Sheets' and an application package. The HSNO Act and regulations may be viewed freely at www.legislation.govt.nz or purchased from most good bookshops. Other references to hazardous substances can be found at the Ministry for the Environment site, www.hsno.govt.nz and www.mfe.govt.nz, which includes "Your Guide to the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act", alternatively, contact them directly on 04 917 7400 and they will send you a copy.

How do I apply?

Contact ERMA NZ directly the details are on the front sheet, or
E-mail info@ermanz.govt.nz, Attention Bryan Watts

Or download

- ❖ User Guide to Becoming a Test Certifier
 - <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/ER-UG-06-3.pdf>
- ❖ Application for Approval as a Test Certifier
 - <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/ER-AT-01-2.pdf>

Other Guidelines in this series

What do I need to know to be a Test Certifier
Completing a Location Certificate
Certificates for Approved Handlers

Your 'Working' Arrangements with ERMA NZ
Professional Indemnity
Conflict of Interest Issues for Test Certifier

