

“Black sheep” fail the safe test

Alarming results with safes marked with inferior certificates

FRANKFURT/M. – Jan. 2010. By far not all safes marked with certificates according to the European Standard EN 1143-1 have the quality of ECB•S certified security products. In recently completed comparison tests, some safes simply failed: One safe marked with resistance grade III only reached the security level of an ECB•S safe of grade I. One safe of grade V complied at best with the ECB•S resistance grade II. The comparison tests of the safes were carried out by the distinguished Stockholm-based SSF testing laboratory.

The look and certification according to the European Standard suggest security – but the differences in quality may be severe. The tested safes did not satisfy the requirements of the security standards they are allegedly based on at all. Both products were certified according to EN 1143-1 (resistance grade III and V, respectively) by a certification body accredited according to EN 45011. The European Security Systems Association (ESSA) is now examining the possibility of sending an official warning to the certification organization concerned.

“We fear that private, commercial and industrial users will opt for the safe with the inferior certificate due to the lower purchasing costs,” says the neutral certification body ESSA. “Insurers, too, have not yet reacted to the severe differences in quality. Many insurers still provide insurance coverage for safes with all certificates according to the European Standard EN 1143-1.”

The ESSA believes that the inferior certificates are threatening the reputation of all certifications and that the consumers are being fooled by them: “The customer must always be able to rely on the correctness of the specifications given by the manufacturer. `Black sheep` are detrimental to the trust the users place in certified security products.”

For quality assurance reasons, the ESSA has joined forces with leading European certification bodies for safes in the EFSG (European Fire and Security Group). The group ensures – among other things by reciprocal audits – a consistent quality level. Its members and their testing laboratories signed the “Multilateral Agreement on Safes and Strongrooms” which confirms that these testing laboratories have an equivalent type testing know-how. “All other certification bodies and testing laboratories may co-operate with the EFSG and may sign the Multilateral Agreement as well,” says the ESSA. “A prerequisite is, however, that they satisfy our high requirements.”

Text: 2573 characters including spaces

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Legend Photo No. 70 and Photo No.19 (on the right)

The look and certification according to the European Standard EN 1143-1 suggest security – but the differences in quality are huge. During comparison tests with ECB•S certified security products, several safes performed poorly (photo). Some certifying organizations are obviously much more generous than the ESSA. The loser is the user who puts his trust in inferior certificates.

Photos: ESSA/ECB•S

Free for reprint – but, please, only with reference to source and in connection with information about the ESSA/ECB•S.

Background ESSA/ECB•S

The European Security Systems Association (ESSA) e.V. with headquarters in Frankfurt/Main is a neutral certification body in accordance with EN 45011. ECB•S is the “brand” of the ESSA. Pursuant to its guiding principle “Quality provides Security”, the ESSA with its ECB•S certification mark guarantees maximum security properties to European standards. At present approx. 930 valid ECB•S certificates are in the global security market.

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