



# Qualified Test Facilities Program: WMTC and SMTC Virtual Solutions for the COVID-19 Era

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

In response to this global pandemic, CSA Group has developed a range of virtual solutions to help our customers meet certification needs, maintain product compliance and adapt to changing circumstances.

These solutions apply to customers enrolled in our **Witnessed Manufacturer's Testing for Certification (WMTC) Program** or our **Supervised Manufacturer's Testing for Certification (SMTC) Program**, which allows you to conduct your own testing for safety and energy efficiency in-house, saving you time and money. The following are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about these programs and the remote and virtual solutions we've devised.

### Responding to COVID-19 – General Questions

**Q: What kinds of options does CSA Group have in place to help its WMTC clients through this challenging COVID-19 period?**

**A:** In response to COVID-19, CSA Group has developed protocols enabling us to conduct almost all of our testing and certification remotely rather than on-site and in person. This will protect our employees and yours. These options might include: live-stream video witnessing, provision of photo and/or video documentation, virtual meetings in which key documents are reviewed by sharing a computer screen, and remote access to certification experts. We've also granted extensions to certain deadlines and made changes to some of our Notices and Informs, among other adaptive measures.

### Fast Facts



CSA Group has developed a range of virtual solutions to help our customers meet certification needs, maintain product compliance and adapt to changing circumstances.



CSA Group can help you recalibrate your lab to respond to changes in your global supply chain.



The WMTC and SMTC programs enable you to conduct your own tests with or without being witnessed by CSA and submit test data to us for third-party review. Conducting your own safety certification tests and energy-efficiency verification tests will save you both time and money.

**Q: I am a new CSA Group customer and would like to enroll in the WMTC Program. Can I obtain an initial assessment remotely?**

**A:** Yes, under certain conditions, as part of our pandemic response, a remote initial assessment can be done. Please note that an on-site validation assessment must be performed within three months after the lifting of travel restrictions, and once it is safe for our staff to travel.

**Q: What if we're not an existing client? Can CSA Group still help us certify our product while taking pandemic-related precautions?**

**A:** Possibly. An initial WMTC assessment conducted remotely may be permitted for new customers under certain conditions. We invite you to contact us by providing your information in the form that appears at the bottom of these FAQs.

**Q: My firm has been in the process of upgrading our lab to the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard. Can CSA Group help us move forward, even during the pandemic?**

**A:** Yes, we can. We can also help you recalibrate your lab to respond to changes in your global supply chain.

**Q: I'd like to find out more. How do get I in touch with the appropriate person at CSA Group?**

**A:** Just enter the basic contact info in the form at the bottom of these FAQs and we will follow up with you.

For the answers to some basic questions, please refer to the **About WMTC and SMTC** section, below.

**Q: Can witness testing be done remotely rather than in person, on site?**

**A:** Yes. During the pandemic, the options of remote witness testing, inspections and auditing are available to our existing customers who are already enrolled in the WMTC program.

**Note:** The product-qualified certifier assigned to witness the testing must deem the image quality and audio appropriate for the testing being conducted.

**Q: What about Initial Factory Evaluations (IFE)s? Can they be done remotely as well?**

**A:** Yes, under certain conditions, as part of our pandemic response, a remote initial factory evaluation can be done. Please note that an on-site validation assessment must be performed within three months after the lifting of travel restrictions, and once it is safe for our staff to travel.

**Q: Is remote witness testing available to customers of CSA Group around the world?**

**A:** Yes, remote testing is part of our pandemic response, and it applies to our clients around the world.

## About the WMTC and SMTC Programs

**Q: What is the Qualified Test Facilities Program?**

**A:** The Qualified Test Facilities Program is an umbrella term for two of CSA Group programs, the:

- **Witnessed Manufacturer's Testing for Certification (WMTC) Program**, and the
- **Supervised Manufacturer's Testing for Certification (SMTC) Program**.

These programs are ideal for manufacturers with frequent certification projects. They enable you to conduct your own tests with or without being witnessed by CSA and submit test data to us for third-party review. Conducting your own safety certification tests and energy-efficiency verification tests will save you both time and money.

**Q: Tell me more about the WMTC Program. What are the benefits?**

**A:** The WMTC Program allows some testing to be conducted at a manufacturer's testing facility. So there are time and cost savings. The WMTC is also a flexible program. CSA Group Certifiers may not have to witness all tests, or witness some tests and perform the balance of tests for which the testing facility has been qualified.

Of course, with the pandemic, for the time being at least, testing is being witnessed remotely.



**Q: Do I need an on-site assessment of my testing facility prior to being accepted into the WMTC?**

**A:** Yes. Your facility will need to undergo a qualification assessment before it can enroll in the WMTC Program.

**Q: Is it required that CSA staff do the witnessed testing on-site?**

**A:** Under normal circumstances, when we are not dealing with a pandemic, CSA staff would do the witnessed testing in person and on-site.

**Q: I am currently a CSA client in the WMTC Program and there may be travel restrictions to my testing facility. Can I still obtain a re-qualification assessment?**

**A:** Yes, while pandemic protocols are in place (and if there are other reasons for the travel restrictions), a re-qualification assessment may be performed remotely.

**Q: I am currently a CSA client and would like to enroll in the WMTC Program. Can I have a remote initial assessment done?**

**A:** Yes. Under certain circumstances, if and while travel restrictions are in place, our existing clients may be permitted to have a remote initial assessment. Please note that the remote initial assessment must be followed by an on-site validation assessment to be performed within three months after the lifting of travel restrictions, and once it is safe for our staff to travel.

## Remote Testing

---

**Q: Is the scope of the testing the same for remote testing as for in-person, on-site testing, or are elements left out when the testing is done virtually?**

**A:** Nothing is left out when testing is conducted remotely. Virtual testing has the same scope as in-person testing, and is undertaken with the same rigor and the same high standards and commitment to quality.

**Q: What kind of technology do customers need to have in place to use the virtual option?**

**A:** Customers need to have the following:

- The ability to capture real-time data

- A high-bandwidth Internet connection (this is important in order to ensure the continuity of the entire process)
- Optionally, a recording device that captures video and audio
- A continuous signal

**Q: Is there a particular software program we should be using?**

**A:** Yes. We recommend Microsoft Teams for remote testing because of the recording requirement. It may be possible to use other platforms as well, but they will need to have a proper security infrastructure in place (as determined by CSA Group's IT department and by yours.)

**Q: What kind of camera or recording equipment do customers need to have in place to use the virtual option?**

**A:** A smartphone camera will work.

**Q: Who operates the camera during a virtual inspection or remote witness testing?**

**A:** The client representative will operate the camera and, using earphones/ear buds, will follow instructions from the CSA Field Services Representative. The CSA Field Services Rep will direct the factory rep as to where to place the camera, where to zoom in or out, etc.

**Note:** When a certification test is being witnessed remotely, it is the certifiers, not the field services rep, who will provide the instructions.

**Q: For factory inspections, what happens if company policy prohibits the use of cameras on or around the production line for security reasons? Is there a workaround?**

**A:** If a walkthrough on the production line is not possible, the product can be dismantled in an inspection room under the guidance of the CSA Field Services Representative. However, required production-line tests would need to be photographed or observed remotely by video.

**Q: Is remote testing available to customers of CSA Group around the world?**

**A:** Yes, remote testing is part of our pandemic response, and it applies to our clients around the world.

**Q: For remote testing, what happens when CSA Group and the customer are in different time zones – such as the difference between Toronto and the EU?**

**A:** If you're in the EU and are being serviced out of North America rather than locally, we will accommodate you and work around your schedule. We do have offices around the world, so there's the possibility of having the testing done by a location in a time zone closer to your own.

**Q: What factors might prevent the witnessing of tests being done remotely?**

**A:** If the video and/or audio quality is not satisfactory enough for the CSA Certification to properly assess whether or not the testing is being conducted properly. Please note that some tests cannot be witnessed remotely.

## Schedules and Deadlines

**Q: If an instrument calibration comes due during the shutdown, is it possible to get an extension?**

**A:** Yes. Generally speaking, we're allowing a grace period of 50% of an instrument's calibration interval. So, if you have a once-a-year calibration interval, for example, you would have an additional six months to have the instrument calibrated. Please note, however, that you must assess the risk of that six-month delay and provide some validation – e.g. your historical data – that the instrument has had no out of tolerance issues.

**Q: For factory inspections, does the factory contact CSA Group or vice versa?**

**A:** The Inspection Group at CSA has a schedule. The group will contact manufacturers to set up their factory inspections. There's no change from the pre-pandemic process.

## During & After COVID-19

**Q: If we take advantage of remote testing now, what happens when the pandemic risk is over and we go back to business as usual?**

**A:** Once normal business practices resume, CSA Group will need to conduct an on-site assessment to validate the testing that was done remotely. If the on-site assessment identifies an issue, certain tests may be repeated at the customer's location or at a CSA Group lab.

**Q: Will CSA Group continue to offer remote witnessed testing once the COVID-19 threat is over?**

**A:** We will monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and make adjustment to our offerings from time to time, while keeping our customers posted for any policy change.

## Contact us:

To find out more, please enter your contact info in the form below and reply to [client.services@csagroup.org](mailto:client.services@csagroup.org)

First Name	
Last name	
Company name	
Email	
Phone number	
Are you an existing customer?	