Date: 2021-12-14

INFORMATION

Fluid Power

KTW assessment basis –
Notes on requirements for seals and their certification

For organic materials in contact with drinking water, proof of suitability for drinking water hygiene must be provided. Products that were previously subject to the KTW-, coating-, or lubricant guideline (German: KTW-Leitlinie, Beschichtungsleitlinie oder Schmierstoffleitlinie) have been assessed since 2021-03-21 according to the assessment basis for plastics and other organic materials in contact with drinking water (German: Bewertungsgrundlage für Kunststoffe und andere organische Materialien im Kontakt mit Trinkwasser (KTW-BWGL)). For them, there is a transitional arrangement (with regard to the confirmation of conformity) until 2023-03-21.

In the case of elastomer-based seals, the confirmation of conformity has so far been carried out in accordance with the elastomer guideline (German: Elastomerleitlinie). According to an information letter from the German Federal Environment Agency, elastomers and thermoplastic elastomers will be included in the scope of the KTW-BWGL with the 3rd amendment to the KTW-BWGL, which is expected to be published on 2022-01-01. No new test certificates will be issued for elastomer-based seals after that date. Existing test certificates will then lose their validity. The associated test report will remain valid until 2023-12-31 at the latest, provided it is not older than 10 years. The elastomer guideline for products in contact with drinking water is to be withdrawn when the 3rd amendment to the KTW-BWGL comes into force. This is expected to be on 2024-01-01.

In the KTW-BWGL, the risk of individual components in contact with drinking water within a plant for the production, treatment, or distribution of drinking water is estimated on the basis of the assignment to various risk groups (P1, P2, P3). The classification is based on the fraction A_B/A of the water-contacting surface of the component A_B within the overall plant or component with surface A. Seals are to be classified in the risk groups P3 (A_B/A < 1 %) and P2 (1 % < A_B/A < 10 %).

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We point out that the transitional regulation (German: Übergangsregelung) does provide a **simplified** confirmation of conformity in the form of a type test for components in risk groups P2 and P3. For this confirmation of conformity, previous test reports that were prepared in the context of issuing can still be used, if test certificates are in accordance with the corresponding guidelines. In addition, there are **no composition requirements for components in risk group P3** anymore. Only compliance with the basic requirements and microbiological requirements must be ensured in order to continue using these components.

In addition, we would like to point out that we, as a seal supplier, do not have any responsibility for the certification of a composite component. In this case, proof of conformity must be provided by the manufacturer of the assembled component, since elastomer components themselves or their compounds can no longer obtain certification (according to an information letter from the German Federal Environment Agency dated 06.05.2021).

Developed by

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member companies of the working group "*Sealing Plates*" within the Fluid Power Association of the VDMA