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**Low Voltage Directive 73/23/EEC****OFFICIAL TITLE**

Council Directive of 19 February 1973 on the harmonization of the laws of Member States relating to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits (73/23/EEC).

**AMENDMENTS TO THIS DIRECTIVE**

Directive 93/68/EEC, OJEC No. L 220, 30 August 1993

**OBLIGATORY SINCE**

The requirements for electrical safety are applicable since 1973; but from 1 January 1997 it is obligatory to affix the CE Marking to products falling within the scope of this directive.

**SCOPE OF THE LOW VOLTAGE DIRECTIVE**

The Low Voltage Directive applies to 'electrical equipment' designed for use with a voltage rating of between 50 and 1000 V for alternating current and between 75 and 1500 V for direct current.

**EXCLUDED FROM THE SCOPE OF THE DIRECTIVE**

Equipment and phenomena outside the scope of the Directive:

- Electrical equipment for use in an explosive atmosphere;
- Electrical equipment for radiology and medical purposes;
- Electrical parts for goods and passenger lifts;
- Electricity meters;
- Plugs and socket outlets for domestic use;
- Electric fence controllers;
- Radio-electrical interference;
- Specialized electrical equipment, for use on ships, aircraft or railways, which complies with the safety provisions drawn up by international bodies in which the Member States participate.

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE LOW VOLTAGE DIRECTIVE**

Principal elements of the safety objectives for electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits are:

- general conditions;
- protection against hazards arising from the electrical equipment;
- protection against hazards which may be caused by external influences on the electrical equipment.

**MAIN OBJECTIVE**

The main objective of the Low Voltage Directives is the protection of the health and safety of persons, and thus to prevent, as far as possible, the placing on the market and putting into service of unsafe or otherwise non-compliant products.

**CONFORMITY MARKING**

Conformity with the Low Voltage Directive is indicated with the CE Marking, which is a mandatory marking for products falling within the scope of this Directive. CE stands for Conformité Européenne, French for European conformity.

Without the CE Marking, and without complying with the provisions of the Directive, the product may not be placed on the market or put into service in the European countries that form the European Economic Area (the EEA consists of the fifteen member states of the EU and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.)

However, if the product meets the provisions of the applicable European Directives these countries may not prohibit, restrict or impede the placing on the market or putting into service of the product. Thus, the CE Marking can be regarded as a product's trade passport for Europe.

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