

Appendix A2 - Specifications for QUALIDECO

☞ EFFECTIVE FROM 01.01.2009 ☞

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1. Scope and purpose of the Specifications

Various technologies can be used to produce decorative finishes on products, such as wood effect. The following Specifications cover technologies based on the transfer of images to coated substrates using the sublimation process or on powder on powder application using suitable techniques. Other technologies may be used only if they have been previously approved by the QUALIDECO Committee.

These Specifications do not include process tests because the technology is patented.

The aim of the QUALIDECO Specifications is to establish minimum requirements that decoration plants, materials and decorated products must meet and to ensure continuous quality control of products so that decorators and – in the case of sublimation technology - powder and film suppliers can be granted a QUALIDECO licence for exterior architectural applications.

TERMINOLOGY¹

QUALIDECO licence: confirmation that a company (decorator, film or powder supplier) operates in accordance with the QUALIDECO Specifications.

QUALIDECO APPROVAL: confirmation that a specific manufacturer's product meets the requirements of the QUALIDECO Specifications.

DECORATOR: plant that applies decorations.

DECORATION: final appearance of a decorative application.

¹ The terms defined below refer to concepts that have not yet been defined by QUALICOAT

2. Decoration using sublimation technology

Decorations using sublimation technology are obtained by transferring an image from a support (that can be paper or plastic film) to a coated surface with a special process using temperature and/or pressure and/or under vacuum.

2.1. Preliminary conditions

- a) The company that performs the coating cycle must hold the QUALICOAT quality label to guarantee that the coating is applied under the best conditions and the company has the equipment for the tests.
- b) The base powder coating must be approved by QUALICOAT for QUALIDECO application.
- c) When applying for QUALIDECO, a decorator using transfer technology must indicate which of the following alternatives applies:
 - **Alternative 1**

The decorator uses film produced by a film manufacturer certified by QUALIDECO (according to § 6.1) in combination with an approved base powder coating.
 - **Alternative 2**

The decorator uses a base powder coating produced by a powder manufacturer certified by QUALIDECO (according to § 6.2) in combination with an approved film.
 - **Alternative 3**

The decorator must have the decorations approved for exterior architectural applications.

2.2. Work specifications for decorators using sublimation technology

2.2.1 Stoving

To obtain decorated finishes, it is necessary to have a stoving process that operates with a system to check the metal temperature, under the conditions prescribed by the film manufacturer.

2.2.2 Laboratory

The decorator must at least be equipped with the following apparatus:

- ◆ specular gloss meter
- ◆ instrument for measuring coating thickness
- ◆ equipment to check metal temperature (for instance thermo labels or temperature recorder)

2.2.3 In-house control

The decorator must monitor the production processes and inspect the decorated products in accordance with the following procedure:

– **Incoming materials**

The decorator must keep a register showing all data concerning the material received and to be decorated (date, lot, coater, coater’s licence number, powder manufacturer, powder approval number, basic colour).

All the coated material must be delivered with a certificate of conformity. This certificate must be archived by the decorator.

The maximum time allowed between coating and decoration is two weeks. During this period, the coated material must be protected from dust and all kind of contamination.

– **Decorated products**

• **Gloss test (EN ISO 2813)**

The gloss must be measured for every lot of decorated products (one lot represents a customer’s complete order in one colour or that part of the order which is in the plant).

If the gloss cannot be measured with apparatus, a visual assessment must be carried out.

The results of these analyses must be entered in some record (register) readily accessible to the inspector, showing the nominal values and maximum values not to be exceeded.

• **Coating thickness test (EN ISO 2360)**

The coating thickness must be measured on at least as many samples as specified below:

Lot size	Number of samples (random selection)	Acceptance limit for rejected samples
1 – 10	All	0
11 – 200	10	1
201 – 300	15	1
301 – 500	20	2
501 – 800	30	3
801 – 1,300	40	3
1,301 – 3,200	55	4
3,201 – 8,000	75	6
8,001 – 22,000	115	8
22,001– 110,000	150	11

The results of these measurements (minimum and maximum values) must be entered and retained on some record readily accessible to the inspector.

– **Stoving conditions**

Stoving conditions must be monitored to ensure compliance with the film manufacturer’s data sheet by measuring the temperature at least once a day on one point of the section surface and at least once a week at 3 different points in the oven to ensure uniform stoving.

2.3. Granting a QUALIDECO licence to decorators using sublimation technology

Before a licence is granted, an inspection of the decorator’s plant must be carried out and laboratory tests must be performed to ensure that the decorations meet the requirements.

Decoration is understood to be a finish in one colour applied in conjunction with an approved and clearly defined powder system.

- If the decorator uses film produced by a film manufacturer certified by QUALIDECO in combination with an approved base powder coating (according to § 6.1) or a base powder coating produced by a powder manufacturer certified by QUALIDECO in combination with an approved film, (according to § 6.2) only two decorations selected by the inspector during his visit need to be tested.
- If none of the above conditions applies, the decorator must have all decorations for exterior architectural applications tested.

2.3.1 Laboratory tests

The following tests must be performed on samples taken from a production lot for exterior architectural applications. Corrosion tests must be carried out on single samples. The standards used are the same as those stipulated in the current edition of the QUALICOAT Specifications, but the limits are different for the accelerated weathering test and Florida exposure.

- **Gloss**
- **Coating thickness**
- **Resistance to humid atmospheres containing sulphur dioxide**
- **Accelerated weathering test**

Even though the colour is not uniform, it is still possible to measure the colour change with instrumental apparatus. In this case, the provisional limit is Delta E = 2 for light base and 3 for dark base. In every case, the final evaluation will be based on visual inspection with the naked eye, with a maximum value of 4 on the grey scale (ISO 105-A02).

- **Florida test**

The test must be carried out under the same conditions as prescribed in the QUALICOAT Specifications. For the time being, the acceptable limits are the same as those stipulated for the accelerated weathering test. The samples for the Florida test should be prepared using sections taken from a daily production lot (flat surface measuring at least 5 x 20 cm).

2.3.2 Inspection

The inspection includes the following:

- **Inspection of plant and equipment**
As specified in § 2.2.1.
- **Inspection of laboratory equipment**
As specified in § 2.2.2 to ensure that the equipment is available and functional.
- **Inspection of decorated products**

The inspector must perform the following tests on the decorated parts:

- Appearance
 - Gloss
 - Coating thickness
- **Examination of registers**

The inspector must check that the plant maintains a control register (*see § 5 Check-list for in-house control*).

The inspector submits the inspection report to the general licensee.

The inspection reports are assessed by the general licensee. Under the supervision of QUALICOAT, the general licensee decides whether or not to grant a QUALIDECO licence.

- If the results meet the requirements, a QUALIDECO licence will be granted.
- If the results do not meet the requirements, the decorator will be informed that the QUALIDECO licence cannot be granted for the time being, stating all details and reasons. A new application can be made only when the company has given notification that it has rectified the deficiencies recorded.

2.4. Renewing a QUALIDECO licence granted to decorators using sublimation technology

2.4.1 Laboratory tests

For renewal of a licence, two decorations selected by the inspector during his visit will be tested every year.

The tests are the same as for granting a QUALIDECO licence.

- If the results of a test on a decoration do not meet the requirements, the test must be repeated on a sample taken from a different lot.
- If the results of the test are again unsatisfactory, the decoration will not be allowed.

2.4.2 Inspection

After a plant has been granted a QUALIDECO licence, it will be inspected once a year according to § 2.3.2.

The business records must also be examined in order to check that the QUALIDECO licence is used for approved decorations only.

The inspector submits the inspection report to the general licensee.

The inspection reports are assessed by the general licensee. Under the supervision of QUALICOAT, the general licensee decides whether to renew or withdraw the QUALIDECO licence.

- If the results of the inspection meet the requirements, the QUALIDECO licence will be renewed.
- If the results of the inspection do not meet the requirements, another inspection must be made within one month (allowing for holiday periods).
- If the second inspection again produces unsatisfactory results, the QUALIDECO licence will be withdrawn immediately. A new application can be made only when the company has given notification that it has rectified the deficiencies recorded.

3. Decoration using powder on powder technology

This effect is obtained in two steps: the main coating (A) is first applied and partially cured. Then in a second step, the final coat (B) is applied on top of the base coat using a special filter and following a specific drawing. The system is then fully cured.

The pre-curing and the curing conditions must be defined by the powder suppliers, and appropriate technical data sheets must be available in the decorator's plant.

3.1. Granting of an approval for a “powder on powder” system for decoration

3.1.1 QUALIDECO approval

If the main coating and the top coating have different approvals (P-Number), the powder supplier must submit 3 samples for the base coat and 3 samples for the top coat in colours defined by QUALIDECO. An approval will be granted to the powder supplier if all the tests are satisfactory.

3.1.2 Extension for decoration using powder on powder

If the main coating and the top coat have the same QUALICOAT approval (P-Number), an “extension for decoration using powder on powder” will be granted by QUALICOAT on the same approval (P-Number) provided that compatibility between both colours is checked following QUALIDECO criteria.

3.1.3 Tests for granting an approval

The following tests will be carried out on decorated samples prepared by the laboratory:

- Resistance to humid atmospheres
- Resistance to boiling water (pressure cooker)
- Accelerated weathering test
- Natural weathering (Florida)

3.2. Renewal of approved “powder on powder” systems for decoration

3.2.1 QUALIDECO approvals

Two colours defined by QUALIDECO for both the base and top coats must be tested in order to renew an approval.

3.2.2 Extensions for decorations using powder on powder

Every year the powder supplier must submit powders for one decoration defined by QUALIDECO.

3.2.3 Laboratory tests

The following tests will be carried out on samples of decorated sections taken by the inspectors during their visits:

- Resistance to humid atmospheres
- Resistance to boiling water (pressure cooker)
- Accelerated weathering test
Even though the colour is not uniform, it is still possible to measure the colour change with instrumental apparatus. In this case, the provisional limit is Delta E = 2 for light base and 3 for dark base. In every case, the final evaluation will be based on visual inspection with the naked eye, with a maximum value of 4 on the grey scale (ISO 105-A02).
- Natural weathering (Florida)

3.3. Licensing of decorators using powder on powder technology

3.3.1 Preliminary conditions

- a) The company that performs the coating cycle must hold the QUALICOAT quality label to guarantee that the coating is applied under the best conditions and the company has the equipment for the tests.
- b) The powder coatings must be approved for decoration according to § 3.1 and 3.2 or by the decorators themselves for all decorations used in architectural applications.
- c) The decorations must be applied at the same production site.

3.3.2 Work specifications for decorators using powder on powder

3.3.2.1 Laboratory

The decorator must at least be equipped with the following apparatus:

- **specular** gloss meter
- **instrument** for measuring coating thickness
- **equipment** to check metal temperature (temperature recorder)

3.3.2.2 In-house control

The decorator must monitor the production processes and inspect the decorated products in accordance with the following procedure:

– **Incoming materials**

The decorator must keep a register showing all data concerning the material received and to be decorated (date, lot, coater, coater's licence number, powder manufacturer, powder approval number, basic colour).

All the coated material must be delivered with a certificate of conformity. This certificate must be archived by the decorator.

The maximum time allowed between coating and decoration is two weeks. During this period, the material must be protected from dust and all kind of contamination.

– **Decorated products**

• **Gloss test (EN ISO 2813)**

The gloss must be measured for every lot of decorated products (one lot represents a customer's complete order in one colour or that part of the order which is in the plant).

If the gloss cannot be measured with apparatus, a visual assessment must be carried out

The results of these analyses must be entered in some record (register) readily accessible to the inspector, showing the nominal values and maximum values not to be exceeded.

• **Coating thickness test (EN ISO 2360)**

The coating thickness must be measured on at least as many samples as specified below:

Lot size	Number of samples (random selection)	Acceptance limit for rejected samples
1 – 10	All	0
11 – 200	10	1
201 – 300	15	1
301 – 500	20	2
501 – 800	30	3
801 – 1,300	40	3
1,301 – 3,200	55	4
3,201 – 8,000	75	6
8,001 – 22,000	115	8
22,001– 110,000	150	11

The results of these measurements (minimum and maximum values) must be entered and retained on some record readily accessible to the inspector.

3.3.2.3 Pre-curing and curing conditions

Pre-curing and curing conditions must be monitored to ensure compliance with the manufacturer's data sheet by measuring the temperature at least once a day on one point of the section surface and at least once a week at 3 different points in the oven to ensure uniform stoving.

3.3.3 Granting a QUALIDECO licence to decorators using powder on powder technology

An inspection of the decorator's plant must be satisfactory before a licence is granted.

The inspection includes the following:

- **Inspection of plant and equipment**
- **Inspection of laboratory equipment** to ensure that the equipment is available and functional.
- **Inspection of decorated products**

The inspector must perform the following tests on the decorated parts:

- Appearance
- Gloss
- Coating thickness

- **Examination of registers**

The inspector must check that the plant maintains a control register (*see Check-list for in-house control*).

The inspector submits the inspection report to the general licensee.

The inspection reports are assessed by the general licensee. Under the supervision of QUALICOAT, the general licensee decides whether or not to grant a QUALIDECO licence.

If the results meet the requirements, a QUALIDECO licence will be granted.

If the results do not meet the requirements, the decorator will be informed that the QUALIDECO licence cannot be granted for the time being, stating all details and reasons. A new application can be made only when the company has given notification that it has rectified the deficiencies recorded.

3.3.4 **Renewing a QUALIDECO licence granted to decorators using powder on powder technology**

After a plant has been granted a QUALIDECO licence, it will be inspected once a year.

The business records must also be examined in order to check that the QUALIDECO licence is used for approved decorations only.

The inspector submits the inspection report to the general licensee.

The inspection reports are assessed by the general licensee. Under the supervision of QUALICOAT, the general licensee decides whether to renew or withdraw the QUALIDECO licence.

- If the results of the inspection meet the requirements, the QUALIDECO licence will be renewed.
- If the results of the inspection do not meet the requirements, another inspection must be made within one month (allowing for holiday periods).
- If the second inspection again produces unsatisfactory results, the QUALIDECO licence will be withdrawn immediately. A new application can be made only when the company has given notification that it has rectified the deficiencies recorded.

4. **Test report**

An official test report can be obtained from the national association or directly from the QUALICOAT Secretariat.

5. **Check-list for in-house control**

See the following pages.

6. Certification procedure for film and powder manufacturers (applies to transfer technology only)

6.1. Certification procedure for film manufacturers

6.1.1 Traceability

All manufacturing steps must be monitored and documented in order to ensure traceability in the production chain.

6.1.2 In-house control

In this context, the finished product is understood to be the film used for sublimation.

The film must be tested after being applied to an approved panel. Durability is tested using apparatus that meets the QUALICOAT Specifications.

The film manufacturer must have laboratory facilities which are separate from the production facilities. This laboratory must have all the apparatus and chemicals necessary for testing the manufacturing process and finished products. It must at least be equipped with the following apparatus and reference material:

- 1) a specular gloss meter
- 2) an instrument for measuring coating thickness
- 3) recorder for stoving temperature and time with four different measuring points
- 4) apparatus for testing resistance to accelerated weathering and for measuring colour change and gloss retention in accordance with the QUALICOAT Specifications
- 5) an application booth
- 6) a transfer system
- 7) a grey scale reference (ISO 105-A02)

Each piece of apparatus must have a data sheet showing the apparatus identification number and calibration checks.

The film manufacturer must use the following procedure to monitor his manufacturing process and test his finished products:

- A sample of each roll (every 1000 metres) must be printed on the coated surface to check the visual appearance. The results must be recorded and at least two samples, taken from the beginning and end of each roll, must be stored.
- The film manufacturer must provide the decorator with a system data sheet, valid for exterior architectural applications (in particular indicating maximum temperatures and times). A copy must be sent to QUALIDECO.
- The film manufacturer must test every single new decoration in his laboratory. The record of the results obtained must be shown to the QUALIDECO inspector.

6.1.3 Granting a licence to a film manufacturer

A licence will be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The film manufacturer must submit a written application identifying the deco-

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ration system (film + powder) to be approved.

2. The plant must have a laboratory equipped with the minimum apparatus (see § 6.1.2).
3. The film manufacturer must send a roll of film for the following **basic decorations** to a QUALIDECO laboratory:
 - WALNUT – OAK applied on a brown base
 - PINE – OAK applied on a beige base

The names of the powder systems used must be specified.

The samples of film must be taken from that part of the roll where the drawing and printing marks appear.

The laboratory must perform the following tests on one decorated section according to the QUALICOAT Specifications:

- Accelerated weathering test
 - Resistance to humid atmospheres containing sulphur dioxide
 - Natural weathering test in Florida
4. An inspection of the film manufacturer's facility must be carried out to check that the in-house control meets the requirements specified in § 6.1.2.

If all the above conditions are met, a licence will be granted to the film manufacturer for the decoration systems tested.

If the inspection or one basic decoration produces an unsatisfactory result, the film manufacturer will be informed that the licence cannot be granted, stating all reasons.

6.1.4 Renewing a licence granted to a film manufacturer

Every certified film manufacturer will be inspected at least once but no more than three times a year by a QUALIDECO inspector.

A licence will be renewed subject to the following conditions:

1. A decorated sample and a corresponding piece of film must be sent to a QUALIDECO approved laboratory once a month for the accelerated weathering test.
2. During his annual visit, the inspector will check the in-house control and take samples of two decorations - one defined by QUALIDECO - in order to verify that they meet the requirements by carrying out the same tests as for granting a licence (see § 6.1.3).

If all the results of the inspection and tests are satisfactory, the film manufacturer's licence will be renewed.

If the inspection is not satisfactory or the tests give negative results, the film manufacturer's licence or – if several systems are approved - the decoration system concerned will be cancelled.

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6.2. Certification procedure for powder manufacturers

6.2.1 Traceability

All manufacturing steps must be monitored and documented in order to ensure traceability in the production chain.

6.2.2 In-house control

The powder manufacturer must have laboratory facilities which are separate from the production facilities. This laboratory must have all the apparatus and chemicals necessary for testing the manufacturing process and finished products. It must at least be equipped with the following apparatus and reference material:

- 1) a specular gloss meter
- 2) an instrument for measuring coating thickness
- 3) apparatus for the mechanical tests
- 4) recorder for stoving temperature and time with four different measuring points
- 5) apparatus for testing resistance to accelerated weathering and for measuring colour change and gloss retention in accordance with the QUALICOAT Specifications
- 6) an application booth
- 7) a transfer system
- 8) a grey scale reference (ISO 105-A02)

Each piece of apparatus must have a data sheet showing the apparatus identification number and calibration checks.

Each production lot must be tested at least once. A coated panel must be prepared after every 100 to 200 kg to check the visual appearance (gloss and colour) and mechanical properties. The results must be recorded in a register.

The powder manufacturer must provide the decorator with a system data sheet. A copy must be sent to QUALIDECO.

In his laboratory, the powder manufacturer must test samples coated with the different approved powders and decorated with the film used for the corresponding decoration system. The record of the results obtained must be shown to the QUALIDECO inspector.

6.2.3 Granting a licence to a powder manufacturer

A licence will be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The powder manufacturer must submit a written application identifying the decoration system (film + powder) to be approved.
2. The plant must have a laboratory equipped with the minimum apparatus (see § 6.2.2).
3. The basic colours to be tested are:
 - brown
 - beige

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4. A QUALIDECO laboratory must perform the following tests on one decorated section according to the QUALICOAT Specifications:
 - Accelerated weathering test
 - Resistance to humid atmospheres containing sulphur dioxide
 - Natural weathering test in Florida
5. An inspection of the powder manufacturer's facility must be carried out to check that the in-house control meets the requirements specified in § 6.2.2.

If all the above conditions are met, a licence will be granted to the powder manufacturer.

If the inspection or one decoration system produces an unsatisfactory result, the powder manufacturer will be informed that the licence cannot be granted, stating all reasons.

6.2.4 Renewing a licence granted to a powder manufacturer

Every certified powder manufacturer will be inspected at least once but no more than three times a year by a QUALIDECO inspector.

A licence will be renewed subject to the following conditions:

1. Three panels of the same colour but taken from a different lot must be sent to a QUALIDECO laboratory once a month for the accelerated weathering tests.
2. A powder sample (1kg) of the approved system used for decoration must be sent to a QUALIDECO laboratory once a month for the accelerated weathering test.
3. There are two options for taking samples of powders:
 - The inspector can take samples of the required colours directly during routine inspections at a decorator's/coater's plant.
 - The inspector can take samples of the required colours during his routine inspections at the powder manufacturer's plant.
4. The same tests as for granting the licence will be carried out (see § 6.1.3).

If all the results of the inspection and tests are satisfactory, the powder manufacturer's licence will be renewed.

If the inspection is not satisfactory or the tests give negative results, the powder manufacturer's licence or – if several systems are approved - the decoration system concerned will be cancelled.

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7. Logo

Authorisation to use the QUALIDECO logo may be granted on condition that the Holder of a QUALIDECO licence operates in accordance with the Specifications. This authorisation is governed by a contract.

The granting of a licence entitles the Holder to use the logo for the products specified. The licence may not be transferred.

7.1. Register of Holders

QUALICOAT shall keep a register showing the name, address and trade description of each Holder, the date on which the licence was granted to the Holder, the number assigned to each Holder, the approved decorations, the date of withdrawal of the licence and any other information or details which QUALIDECO may deem necessary at any time.

The Holder shall notify QUALICOAT forthwith of any changes in name or address.

7.2. Use of the logo by Holders

The logo exists in black and white, in white and blue (PANTONE Reflex Blue CV; RGB: 14-27-141; CMYK: 100-72-0-6) and in blue and silver (PANTONE Silver 877u; RGB: 205-211-215; CMYK: 8-3-3-9).



**DECORATOR
FILM SUPPLIER
POWDER SUPPLIER**
(Licence No xxxxx)



**DECORATOR
FILM SUPPLIER
POWDER SUPPLIER**
(Licence No xxxx)

The Holder may not make any alteration or addition to the logo when using it. In the event that the Holder's own brands or trademarks are used separately on or in connection with his products, these regulations may not be infringed in any manner whatsoever. Holders of a QUALIDECO licence shall at any time provide the GL with all information required as to the use of the logo.

Whenever a Holder makes mention or reference to QUALIDECO, it must systematically indicate its licence number. This shall apply both to the use of the logo and in texts.

Improper use of the QUALIDECO logo may lead to the sanctions stipulated in § 7.5.

7.3. Withdrawal of licences

Failure to comply with the Regulations

The GL shall withdraw the licence if the Holder ceases to comply with these regulations and in particular if the Holder is guilty of any improper use of the logo or has failed to pay the annual fee.

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In the event of withdrawal of a licence, the Holder shall be given notice in writing by the GL and such notice shall be effective immediately. In such event, all tags, labels, bands, stencils, stamps, wrappers, containers, price lists, business notices, business cards and any other objects in or upon which the logo is affixed shall either be delivered to the GL or, upon the GL's instructions, kept at the disposal of the GL until a new QUALIDECO licence is granted.

Significant changes in a company

In the case of any significant event in a company (change in shareholders or key personnel, new lines) that company must notify the GL immediately. The GL shall be authorised to make a supplementary visit in order to ensure that the Holder continues to satisfy all the conditions stipulated in the Specifications.

If the Decorator ceases to trade, all tags, labels, bands, stencils, stamps, wrappers, containers, price lists, business notices, business cards and any other objects in or upon which the logo is affixed shall either be delivered to the GL or, upon the GL's instructions, kept at the disposal of the GL until a new QUALIDECO licence is granted.

Voluntary withdrawal

In the event of voluntary withdrawal of a licence, all tags, labels, bands, stencils, stamps, wrappers, containers, price lists, business notices, business cards and any other objects in or upon which the logo is affixed shall either be delivered to the GL or, upon the GL's instructions, kept at the disposal of the GL until a new QUALIDECO licence is granted.

7.4. Sanctions

In the event of improper use of the QUALIDECO logo or of any behaviour or action which could impair the image of the Quality Label, the following sanctions may be imposed either by the GL or by QUALICOAT in countries without a national association:

1. *official statement*
2. *reprimand*
3. *withdrawal of the label*

The party concerned shall have the right to appeal first at the GL's level and finally at the QUALICOAT Executive Committee's level whose decision is final.

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7.5. Amendments

The regulations stipulated in § 7 of the QUALIDECO Specifications may be amended if and when necessary. However, the Holder shall be allowed 4 months from the date of publication in which to comply with any such amendment.

7.6. Notices

Any notice required to be given to or by the Holder under these regulations shall be effective if sent by correctly stamped and addressed letter.