

Approval Process for Sweeping Devices



The following should be read in conjunction with the Specifications for Sweeping Devices and the Statement of Principles regarding Competition Equipment.

The events of the 2015-16 season and subsequent consultation with stakeholder groups over the past year have led the WCF to develop a system for product approval that uses independent expertise to help ensure sweeping equipment on the field of play meets WCF specifications and performs within the scope of acceptable performance, as determined by the Sweeping Survey and Sweeping Summit work undertaken in early 2016.

Conforming sweeping devices must be readily available to the general curling population and must be manufactured to a standard that ensures a consistency of product over multiple and ongoing production runs. To these two principles are met, all manufacturers wishing to apply for a WCF Product Code are required to first apply to be recognised as an Effective Manufacturer.

Following confirmation as an Effective Manufacturer, application may be made for WCF Product Code(s) for Sweeping Device(s). As part of this process, it is expected that an Effective Manufacturer will have conducted their own checks to ensure that their product is within WCF Specifications and on-ice tests to confirm their equipment performs within the scope of performance of the three designs of sweeping equipment approved following the 2016 Sweeping Summit.

Conformance Checks will be carried out by the National Research Council of Canada (NRC), and subject to the outcome of those tests, the NRC may recommend further performance testing be undertaken by the WCF to ensure the equipment performs within the range of acceptability before a WCF Product Code is issued. Effective Manufacturers should note that equipment which is close to the margins of the published specifications is more likely to be subject to additional testing to ensure it performs within the established scope of performance.

Once issued, an Effective Manufacturer may apply the WCF Product Code to the approved product and submit a photo of the product displaying the code to the WCF for it to be added to the approved list.

Effective Manufacturer

“Effective Manufacturer” means the enterprise which itself manufactures the competition equipment and/or effectively controls, manages and directs the manufacturing of the competition equipment under its own responsibility through customary subcontracting processes, and whose competition

equipment is offered for sale on the open market to end users through customary and widely accessible distribution channels.

If requested by the WCF, an enterprise claiming to be an “Effective Manufacturer” shall provide documentary evidence of commercial activities from product manufacturing through retail sales for the purpose of verifying the enterprise is and remains an Effective Manufacturer and as a condition for commercial markings to be accepted as an Effective Manufacturer’s identification as further defined in WCF specifications.

Verification includes corporate registration, manufacturing activity in the market of the relevant piece of competition equipment, control over the manufacturing process, existence of a robust quality assurance process, wholesale distribution, retail activity and marketing expenditures linking the brand to the relevant piece of equipment.

To be recognised as an Effective Manufacturer an applicant is required to submit an application form along with an Initial Fee of US\$2000; if after investigation, a prospective Effective Manufacturer is found not to meet requirements, 50% of that fee will be returned to the applicant. To maintain recognition as an Effective Manufacturer, an Annual Renewal fee of US\$1000 must be paid to the WCF for ongoing costs relating to management of the equipment approval process.

These annual fees are used to cover the cost of registering the Effective Manufacturer, maintaining their valid WCF Product Codes on the WCF website, issuing new WCF Product Codes as a result of new fabric batches, registering and archiving fabric samples, provision of notice regarding proposed rules changes, issuing of new WCF Product Codes following successful conformance checks and performance testing, ensuring manufacturers continue to meet the definition of Effective Manufacturer, advance communication of WCF's "areas of interest" regarding equipment specifications, design and construction, ongoing post-production testing and testing of equipment collected from athletes at competitions.

Patents and Commercial Rights

The purpose of the Approval Process for Sweeping Devices is to determine if equipment submitted for conformance checks and testing qualify for a WCF Product Code. It is the responsibility of the manufacturer submitting the application to ensure there are no pre-existing patents or commercial rights which would prohibit the equipment from being sold commercially by the applicant.

Sweeping Equipment Conformance Check

Each application for a Sweeping Equipment Conformance Check must be accompanied by a US\$2500 conformance check fee. This fee covers the cost of NRC testing the brush head, pad or cover for conformance to the specifications and the related administration and processing costs. Whether or not the equipment passes the conformance check the fees are non-refundable.

Complete assemblies and components (details on the numbers and components required to be submitted can be found in the application form) are submitted to NRC for the conformance test. Testing will begin within 14 days of an application being received, subject to timely receipt of necessary equipment and components and payment of required fees. Results of the Conformance Check will be provided to the applicant within 28 days of the application being received. Only pads from a recognized Effective Manufacturer will be considered for a Conformance Check.

Evidence of an Effective Manufacturer's own testing should be provided with the application. However, if an Effective Manufacturer chooses not to do any pre-application testing, that is their prerogative but it increases the chances their product will not be found to meet specifications or will be required to undergo additional performance testing.

The NRC may recommend the issuing of a WCF Product Code without the need for further performance testing if they feel that the Conformance Check indicates no additional testing is required.

Performance Testing (only if required following NRC Conformance Test)

Performance testing will only be required if recommended by the NRC, after finding the applicant equipment to conform to WCF Specifications. The cost of the Performance Testing is the responsibility of the Effective Manufacturer(s) whose equipment is being tested and will cover the cost of the testers and all testing related expenses. All Effective Manufacturers have the right to attend any WCF Performance Testing sessions.

Application for a Variation of WCF Equipment Standards

It is expected that in time there may be an application from a manufacturer or an undertaking from the WCF itself to vary the WCF Specifications.

In this case, necessary testing as determined by the WCF will be set for an agreed date with at least six months notice provided to all Effective Manufacturers of the proposed variation in the WCF Specifications. All Effective Manufacturers will be given the opportunity to submit products for testing provided they conform to the proposed varied standards. Costs for testing would be shared among the participating Effective Manufacturers unless the variation in specifications is initiated by the WCF, in which case the WCF will assume the costs of the testing.

Post-production testing and testing of equipment collected at competitions

It should be noted that the WCF reserves the right to undertake the testing of any previously approved equipment post-production. Any approved equipment may be secured through retail channels and subjected to the standard conformance check by the NRC. If new equipment bearing a WCF Product Code is found to be outside of the WCF Specifications or varies in any respect from the approved design and construction, the applicable WCF Product Code(s) may be suspended or invalidated at the sole

discretion of the WCF. Should this situation occur, consultation with the respective Effective Manufacturer will occur and at least 24 hours' notice will be provided prior to any action being taken.

Additionally, the WCF reserves the right to undertake testing of approved equipment collected at WCF Championships and Events. Approved equipment may be collected from the participants and any equipment collected for testing becomes the property of the WCF. If equipment bearing a WCF Product Code is found to be outside of the WCF Specifications or varies in any respect from the approved design and construction and has not been modified post-production, the applicable WCF Product Code(s) may be suspended or invalidated at the sole discretion of the WCF. Should this situation occur, consultation with the respective Effective Manufacturer will occur and at least 24 hours' notice will be provided prior to any action being taken.

Undesirable Performance of an Approved Sweeping Device

While this approval process has been designed to reduce or eliminate the risk of sweeping equipment performing outside the established scope of performance, it is possible that previously unknown combinations of various allowable design elements may inadvertently cause a sweeping device to perform beyond the scope of acceptable performance.

If reports of undesirable performance results from a previously approved product can be substantiated, the WCF retains the right to temporarily suspend a WCF Product Code until such time as that equipment can be subjected to further testing and analysis. This action would only be taken following consultation with the NRC and the Effective Manufacturer of the sweeping device in question.