

Textiles Committee comes up with fully indigenous Design and Make in India PPE Testing Equipment

The unveiling of Accredited PPE testing facility in Mumbai under Textiles Committee will provide much-needed and timely Quality Assurance to Governments as well as PPE body coverall manufacturers: Secretary, Textiles Committee

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Textiles Committee, Mumbai too will now test and certify PPE body coveralls required for healthcare workers and other COVID-19 warriors. The inclusion of Textiles Committee as the ninth approved laboratory to test and certify body coveralls has been announced by the Ministry of Textiles yesterday evening.

Speaking on the development, Secretary, Textiles Committee and Additional Textile Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, Ajit Chavan explained how the Committee rose up to the occasion to surmount the challenge of non-availability of reputed domestic manufacturers of PPE testing equipment: "Transparency, objectivity and professional service is not new to The Textiles Committee. This is just one more initiative by the Committees' dedicated workforce to rise up to the occasion and do our bit in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. We faced the humungous challenges of non-availability of domestic manufacturers of repute and incessant delay/long gestation period to import machine from China as also challenges of ever-increasing prices by the opportunist companies in China due to demand for such equipment the world over. We therefore decided to do it indigenously. We got the machine conceptualized and designed completely in-house and ourselves produced the vital equipment viz. Synthetic Blood Penetration Testing equipment, required for Determination of the resistance of Protective Clothing materials to penetration by blood and body fluids."

The Textiles Committee team took almost 45 days of painstaking work to accomplish this feat. The National accreditation body NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing & Calibration Laboratories) has audited the lab facility and has approved it under three test standards: ASTM F1670/ 16an70M:17a, ISO 16603: 2004 & IS 16546: 2016.

The Secretary informed how the testing equipment will help the nation during the crisis: "With the acquisition of this equipment and with a concrete plan to add some more equipment as per need, we will be able to address not only the quantitative but also the qualitative requirements involved in the testing of Body Coveralls worn by the frontline health workers and other COVID-19 warriors".

Shri Chavan assured: "As a serious and professional testing organisation with the mandate for quality, we will work overtime to uphold the Textiles Ministry's directives on quality and would also evolve our own initiatives to further bolster these efforts".

The Ministry of Textiles, under the leadership of the Textiles Minister Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, has been taking several steps to ensure that both quality and quantity of PPE coveralls going up to the desired levels within a very short span of time of two months, thereby catapulting India into the world's second largest manufacturer of body coveralls, next only to China. The Ministry has taken steps to ensure that only certified players across the entire supply chain are allowed to supply body coveralls to governments. Several officials have been posted in the field for onsite facilitation and oversight of quality of material meant for government supplies and for ensuring

traceability and ownership of quality by these manufacturers. A Unique Certification Code (UCC) is issued for each passed / cleared prototype sample submitted by the manufacturers of the PPE Coveralls. This is required to be embossed on each manufactured Coverall along with the name of the manufacturer, date of manufacture and name of the client. This procedure has been fully implemented in respect of procurement by M/s HLL Lifecare Limited, which is the procurement agency for the hospitals and healthcare organisations under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. The manufacturers are also required to submit an affidavit along with their submitted sample, stating details of their manufacturing unit, GSTIN number, company registration number, Udyog Aadhar number or DIC registration number and other relevant details. They are also required to declare that they are textile manufacturers and not traders. The affidavit is to form a part of the UCC Certificate.

Details of all UCC Certificates are available on the official websites of DRDO, OFB (Ordnance Factory Board) and SITRA, for verification by the public.

The eight other labs are: (i) South India Textiles Research Association (SITRA), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu (ii) DRDO-INMAS, New Delhi, (iii) Heavy Vehicle Factory, Avadi, Chennai (iv) Small Arms Factory, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (v) Ordnance Factory, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (vi) Ordnance Factory, Muradnagar, Uttar Pradesh (vii) Ordnance Factory, Ambarnath, Maharashtra and (viii) Metal & Steel Factory, Ishapore, West Bengal. All these laboratories have been accredited by NABL.

About Textiles Committee

The Textiles Committee is a statutory body established in 1963 through an Act of Parliament and is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. It has been formed to ensure the quality of textiles and textile machinery both for internal consumption and export purpose. The Committee is tasked with the functions of establishing laboratories for the testing of textiles and textile machinery and providing for their inspection and examination, besides other functions which flow from the main objective of ensuring quality of textiles products and textiles machinery.

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