

LIGHTNING PROTECTION SYSTEMS

INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION

The National Fire Protection Association NFPA 780 is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) adopted US standard for lightning protection systems.

UL Solutions (UL) is the only Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) in the lightning protection industry that both certifies system components and performs lightning protection system installation inspections. UL Standards & Engagement is a Standards Development Organization (SDO) accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). UL Standards & Engagement has developed two Standards for Safety: UL 96, “Lightning Protection Components” and UL 96A, “Installation Requirements for Lightning Protection Systems”. UL 96A is based on and closely follows NFPA 780.

UL Solutions is also an independent laboratory recognized by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to test products to applicable safety standards. UL’s Lightning Protection System Program is accredited by IAS (International Accreditation Service), an independent 3rd party accreditation body, to the ISO 17020 standard for Inspection Certification Bodies.

UL 96 covers the design and construction of lightning protection system components. When you purchase a “UL Listed” component, it is certified under UL 96. It meets the requirements of the standard and is stamped or labeled accordingly.

UL 96A covers the design and installation of lightning protection system, i.e., how you install the UL Listed components. Installers who have been through a UL Knowledge Solutions class can become a “UL Certified Lightning Protection System Installer”.

There are three basic UL certifications for completed lightning protection installations:

- UL Master Label

- UL Letter of Findings

- UL Engineering Inspection Report

UL Master Label[®] Certificate

The Master Label[®] is UL's inspection certificate/label issued for a compliant lightning protection system installation. Only lightning protection systems installed on the entire structure by a UL Certified Lightning Protection System Installer and found to be fully compliant with the inspection standard are eligible to be issued a UL Master Label[®] Certificate. This certificate may be issued based on compliance with any nationally published standard including but not limited to UL 96A, NFPA 780, IEC 62305 and US Military standards.

Master Label[®] Certificate expiry dates are listed on the certificate. For standards including UL 96A, NFPA 780, and US Military standards the expiry date indicated on the certificate is 5 years from the date of issuance.

Certificates may be reissued at any time by confirming conformity with requirements by inspection. The general public, building owners, insurance agencies, or other interested parties can view current copies of Master Label[®] Certificates on UL's Internet directory at <https://lps.ul.com>.

Letter of Findings Report

The UL Letter of Finding report is issued when the scope of the lightning protection system inspection is limited. This may include construction limitations where the installation only encompasses a portion of the structure, contractual limitations where the UL Certified Lightning Protection System Installer is under contract to perform installation/upgrades or other work to a portion of a building or any other limitations that would not cover the entirety of the installed lightning protection system. Examples include new additions (e.g. new emergency room wing on a hospital) or the replacement of the lightning protection system when a roof is replaced (commonly called a "re-roof"). It may also include intentional noncompliance due to construction or contractual obligations that renders a lightning protection system ineligible for a UL Master Label[®] Certificate.

The Letter of Findings can provide evidence that the newly installed lightning protection system is compliant with the standards specified. This document is not published on UL's Internet directory.

Engineering Inspection / GAP Analysis Report

A UL Engineering Inspection Report may be issued for inspections where the standard specified is not a nationally adopted or industry accepted standard for LPS installations; when criteria for the LPS installation inspection is based on LPS manufacturer's Listed product installation guidelines; when inspection criteria require additional information to be included in the report such as ground resistance test results, design drawings, risk analysis reports or installation photographs; when a UL customer is not also a UL Certified Lightning Protection System Installer under the product category code (OWAY).

A GAP Analysis report may be issued for an inspection of an installed lightning protection system when the criteria is to determine and document non-compliances. The report is typically used by building owners or contractors to have a previously installed lightning protection system reviewed prior to any new installations or repairs taking place.

The Engineering Inspection Report and GAP Analysis Report are informational documents. These documents are provided directly to the customer requesting the inspection and are not typically published in the public domain on UL's Internet directory.

Summary

There are no other legitimate NRTL's in the US industry, only membership associations and trade organizations. So, the next time some lightning rod company tells you that their membership association certification is just as legitimate and valid as is UL's, reflect on the above and don't be fooled. Carefully consider whether or not to accept their certification, as your insurance company will probably do the same.