

6. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

The regulatory environment surrounding construction in Mexico is complex. It involves differing federal, state and municipal laws and building codes. For suppliers of construction products, the most important areas of concern are: product standards;

- building codes;
- tariff rates;
- product markings; and
- environmental regulations.

PRODUCT STANDARDS

Mexico has a system of official standards called *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas* or *NOMs*. These standards are an important consideration for companies exporting capital goods, machinery and building materials to Mexico.

The Mexican bureau of standards, the *Dirección General de Normas (DGN)* establishes the weight and measurement standards for the country. The metric system is used in Mexico and measurements are based on the International System of Units. Mexican standards generally follow those that are used in the industrialized countries. Mexico observes the standards set by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the American Society for Testing of Materials (ASTM).

The *DGN* also administers a system of specific product *NOMs*. Many imported goods, including building and construction materials, require certificates of compliance with these *NOMs* before they enter the country. The *DGN* publishes quality standards for a wide range of construction products. Detailed information and copies of *DGN* standards for construction products may be obtained by contacting the *Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (SECOFI)*, *Dirección General de Normas*, at the address provided in the contacts list at the end of this profile.

The first step in exporting a construction product to Mexico is to determine if a standard exists for that product. If there is a standard, a certificate of compliance will be required. There are two kinds of standards:

- voluntary standards for which products do not require certification; and
- mandatory standards for which products must be certified and bear “*NOM*” labelling.

There are more than 5,000 voluntary standards and over 250 mandatory standards. Voluntary standards cover quality issues, industrial processes and test methods. Mandatory standards generally concern consumer health and safety, the protection of the environment and ecology, and the disclosure of commercial information to consumers.

