

6 Ways to Save Money on Consumer Product Testing (Without Cutting Corners)

Many companies find safety testing for their consumer products to be extremely expensive, but it doesn't have to be that way. While you will need to test your products in order to meet government regulations and to protect your company from potential lawsuits, there are several strategies that one may use to keep costs manageable.

1. Component testing. Often the same component, such as a screw, a zipper, paint or coating, will be used in many of your products. In the United States, this part can be tested once as a separate entity and then used multiple times without having to retest it, saving you a lot of money. Some countries do not allow this, but if you are selling in the US this can be a savings. When it is feasible consider manufacturing with the same paint or parts, in order to take advantage of this cost savings.

2. Combine testing. Sometimes several similar items can be tested together in one test. We can often test up to three items together for the price of one. This can't always be done and there is a potential downside, but it is usually worthwhile to do. Ask your lab to explain you the downside and when it can be done.

3. Think ahead. Do you plan to sell your products only in the United States? What about California? Canada? EU? Knowing ahead of time where you plan on selling your products can help you save money by combining similar testing for different countries regulations at a lowered rate. If you have plans to sell there within the year it is worth considering how much more it will cost. Having to retest for additional countries later on often requires starting from the beginning and ends up much more expensive.

4. Know which tests are required. Deciding if a test is needed or not needed should be based on its intended use. Sometimes I find that customers had been testing things that didn't need to be tested. For example, uncolored fabric and paper is exempt from most chemical testing in the United States. I have had customers request identification testing for PVC. We can do a PVC identification test, but it is not a requirement.

5. Don't wait to get caught. Many people and companies have found out the hard way about how expensive it is to get caught. In California, private citizens and environmentalist groups buy products, test, and sue if they don't meet the standards, collecting settlements in the tens of thousands of dollars. The Customs and Border Patrol can seize products and warehouse them at the importer's expense for weeks or even months until the testing is all completed. In many industries this delay can result in missing a selling season altogether; late deliveries are never a good thing in any industry.

6. Work with a lab that works with you on how to save money. A lab should spend time with its customers to see which of these cost saving ideas are appropriate, and the easiest way to implement them.

To find out more about how STC can help saving your testing cost, please email us at usstc@stc.group or call (862) 229-6388.