

# Dept may include more products undergoing Sirim tests

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SHAH ALAM: The Standards Department is expanding the list of priority products that must undergo the national standard certification for safety, said its director-general Mariani Mohammad.

"We are looking at products in the critical areas of use, such as transport, childcare, gas supply products and even building materials.

"These industries alone have a whole list of products that can be recommended for mandatory certification, including tyres, children playground equipment, cement and steel bars," she told reporters on Monday evening at a press conference during a *buka puasa* function hosted by Sirim Berhad.

Mariani added that mandatory standard certification by accredited bodies such as Sirim QAS Sdn Bhd played a crucial role in enhancing health, safety and environment protection for consumers.

Currently, only safety products such as helmets, electrical items, telecommunications equipment and fire safety products need to be certified to conform to the national Malaysian Standard (MS).

Said Mariani: "We will introduce the mandatory certification for the different industries in stages."

Sirim Berhad chief executive Datuk Dr Mohd Ariffin Aton said Sirim and its subsidiaries were ready and able to handle the testing of products to help companies obtain the relevant certification.

In addition to safety certification, he said, Malaysia needed to enhance standards for performance.

He noted that this matter was highlighted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who was upset when a salesman recommended a foreign-made iron to him recently over a local one.

"Dr Mahathir wanted to know what was the difference as both irons carried the Sirim labels. He brought up the matter in Cabinet and it was referred to us," he said, adding that Sirim's MS labelling on the irons addressed product safety, not product performance.

Dr Mohd Ariffin said this incident showed that products that had undergone testing for safety as well as performance were the preferred choice.

"It will be to the advantage of local manufacturers to get their products certified for both aspects so as not to lose out to foreign competitors," he said.