

Cookware import compliance checklist

Work top to bottom before you place a purchase order. Every line is a document you should hold on file, or a check you should run yourself. Nothing here depends on trusting a supplier's word.

A. Baseline — every US import

Item	Source	Accept it only when
☐ FDA food-contact compliance	Supplier or accredited lab	Test report names your exact product, material and surface finish, dated within 12 months
☐ California Prop 65 declaration	Supplier, backed by lab data	Declaration is product-specific and backed by a heavy-metal test, not a generic statement
☐ Country of origin marking	Supplier packaging artwork	Every retail unit and outer carton is marked with origin, per US customs rules
☐ Material declaration	Supplier	States steel grade (304 / 201 / 430), core alloy, coating system and handle material in writing
☐ Mill certificate (MTR) , if 304 is specified	Steel producer	Document originates from the mill, and Cr / Ni values match the claimed grade
☐ Packaging & carton spec	Supplier	Includes drop-test standard, carton dimensions, gross weight and units per carton

B. By sales channel

Channel	Additional documents normally required
☐ Amazon / e-commerce	FDA food contact; Prop 65 where selling into California; label artwork with warnings as applicable
☐ Retail chain	FDA food contact; Prop 65; supplier social audit (BSCI / Sedex / SMETA / WCA); ISO 9001 evidence; packaging compliance for DC routing
☐ Foodservice / restaurant supply	NSF or NSF ANSI listing where the item is a commercial food-equipment product; FDA food contact; heavier duty specification confirmation
☐ Hotel / hospitality group	FDA food contact; NSF where applicable; batch consistency commitment and spare-part availability
☐ Private label / brand owner	All of the above, plus trademark clearance, artwork approval records, and a quality agreement covering defect thresholds

C. Verification you run yourself — never delegated

Action	Notes
☐ Look up every certificate number in the issuer's own database	Lab websites, certification-body registries, or a direct email to the issuing office. An unverifiable number is a decorative document.
☐ Match the report to your product	Check the sample description, material and surface finish on the report against the PO. "Similar product" is not a match.
☐ Check the report date	Within 12 months is the working rule. Formulas and material sourcing change between batches.
☐ Confirm the lab is accredited	Look for an accreditation body mark on the report itself, not a claim in an email.
☐ Commission an XRF test on one unit	SGS, Intertek or a local lab; typically \$50–\$150. Verifies alloy grade on the physical goods, which no paper document can.
☐ Book a pre-shipment inspection	Above roughly \$5,000 order value. SGS, Intertek, Bureau Veritas or QIMA. Confirm quantity, workmanship and packaging before the container is sealed.
☐ Write remedies into the contract	State that a failed XRF test, or a report that cannot be verified, is grounds for refund or replacement at the supplier's cost.

D. Red flags that end the conversation

- A CE certificate offered for cookware — CE does not cover cookware.
- A certificate image with no verifiable number, or a number absent from the issuer's registry.
- A "report" that does not name the product, the material or the test method.
- An ISO 9001 claim with no certificate body, no certificate number and no validity dates.
- Refusal to provide a wall cross-section, or refusal of a live production-floor call.
- A business licence that registers a trading company while the seller describes itself as the manufacturer.

Keep the file, not just the link. Store every report with its date and the PO number it relates to. When a retailer or marketplace asks for evidence eighteen months later, the file is what answers — a supplier's promise is not.

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General industry information for procurement teams. Not legal advice. Confirm current requirements with your customs broker and compliance counsel for your specific product, market and channel.