

## PCI Security Standards Council bulletin on determination of PCI approval status for PTS devices

December 07, 2011

As noted in the [PCI PIN Transaction Security \(PTS\) Device Testing and Approval Program Guide](#), vendors may produce devices with the same model name/number in both PCI approved and non-approved versions. This may occur for several reasons, including:

- Vendors manufacture and sell versions of these devices prior to making changes required to achieve compliance to the PCI PTS requirements.
- Vendors may have customers who desire capabilities (e.g., allow loading of single component plaintext secret keys, use of the same key for multiple purposes such as both PIN and key encipherment, etc.) not allowed under the PCI PTS requirements.
- Vendors may obfuscate the versions they sell in order to market products as the approved version that are less costly to produce than the actual approved version.

### Background

PCI requires that the approved versions of devices must show the version numbers of hardware and firmware like they have been approved and they are shown in the list of approved devices. The hardware version number **must** be shown on a label attached to the device. The firmware (including PTS listed applications if applicable) version number, and optionally the hardware version number, **must** be shown on the display or printed during startup or on request.

The fields that make up the version numbers may consist of a combination of fixed and variable alphanumeric characters. A lower-case "x" is used by PCI to designate all variable fields. The "x" represents fields in the version numbers that the vendor can change at any time to denote a different device configuration. Examples include: country usage code, customer code, communication interface, device color, language etc.

The "x" field(s) has/have been assessed by the laboratory and PCI SSC as to not impact the device's security requirements or the vendor's approval. To ensure that the payment security device has been approved, acquiring customers or their designated agents are strongly advised to purchase and deploy only those payment security devices with the Hardware and Firmware #s whose fixed alphanumeric characters match exactly the Hardware and Firmware #s depicted on the PCI PTS Device Approval List.

For more information, please see the [PCI PTS Device Testing and Approval Program Guide](#).

### Action

In order to help ensure that entities deploying PTS devices deploy equipment that are the PCI approved versions and are compliant to applicable Payment Brand mandates, PCI recommends:

- Entities purchasing devices only purchase devices that are compliant to the requirements for labeling and displaying the hardware and firmware/application versions as stipulated above. Furthermore, the version numbers **must** be in accordance with the version numbers listed on the PCI website for that specific device model name/number. Devices not meeting the aforementioned **should not** be considered the PCI approved product version.

- Vendors are issued approval letters for devices they submit for evaluation which receive PCI approval. However, for various reasons, including revocation of approval, information on those letters may become inaccurate. Therefore the PCI website is considered the authoritative source and should **always** be used to validate the approval status of a vendor's product.
- Purchase orders for point-of-interaction PIN-acceptance devices **must** specify compliance to the applicable [PCI Point of Interaction Security Requirements](#) document.