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FIPS 140-2 “Trust But Verify”

The FIPS 140 Validation process was created by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to ensure that all crypto products used by the federal government have been submitted to a certified 3rd party NVLAP to be examined and tested. The vendor is required to submit their product along with mounds of Source Code, Schematics (hardware), Security Policies, State Machines, etc. for a thorough vetting of the product being offered. The validation is required by all U.S. Government agencies and is also recognized by many foreign governments as fact. Commercial institutions rely on the standard as a measuring tool to determine the strength of a product.

The FIPS 140-2 Validation Process is sacred to the sanctity of the security products being used by the Federal Government and industry.

To ensure that the product you are examining has actually been submitted to a lab for validation, ask for their certificate. If the name on the certificate does not match the name of the manufacturer of the product, then, the certificate is not theirs, The product has not gone through the entire validation process, and cannot claim to be completely validated.

If your vendor produces a certificate where they are not the named owner, their product has never been near a NIST lab and is not on the Validated List.