



The American National Standards Process

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) facilitates the development of American National Standards (ANSs) through the accreditation of procedures used by standards developers and the approval of standards as American National Standards. There are approximately 200 ANSI-accredited standards developers who develop consensus standards in numerous different sectors. To be ANSI-accredited, a standards developer is required to adhere to a set of due process-based requirements or procedures that govern the consensus development process. The ANSI Executive Standards Council (ExSC) is the ANSI committee that is charged with accrediting standards developers.

The ANSI Board of Standards Review (BSR) approves standards as American National Standards (ANS). ANSI BSR approval of a standard as an ANS is based on evidence of procedural compliance as provided by the standards developer. ANSI approval does not indicate that the ANSI BSR (or any other committee within ANSI) has reviewed the technical content of the document. Rather, approval as an ANS is based on a review of evidence of compliance with accredited procedures, *i.e.*, the process by which the technical content was developed. The ANSI BSR does not adjudicate technical issues, but does evaluate whether technical issues were afforded due process in accordance with ANSI's requirements and the ANSI-accredited standards developer's procedures.

The procedures that govern the American National Standards process are called the *ANSI Essential Requirements: Due process requirements for American National Standards (ANSI Essential Requirements)*.

The hallmarks of the American National Standards process include:

- consensus must be reached on a proposed standard by a group or "consensus body" that includes representatives from materially affected and interested parties;
- draft standards are required to undergo one or more open public reviews during which time any member of the public may submit comments;
- comments submitted by voting members of the relevant consensus body and by public review commenters must be evaluated, responded to and if appropriate, incorporated into the draft standard; and
- anyone believing that due process principles were not sufficiently respected during the standards development process has the right to appeal in accordance with the ANSI-accredited procedures of the standards developer.

ANSI-accredited standards developing organizations — and the experts that populate the consensus bodies of these groups — serve an important public interest function in devising American National Standards. The public interest is both served and protected if the standards developer is accredited by ANSI and meets the Institute's requirements for openness, balance, consensus and other due process safeguards.

The American National Standards process ensures that there is an opportunity for all those who are interested in and affected by a standard to participate in its development. Due process is key to ensuring that American National Standards are developed in an environment that is equitable, accessible and responsive to the requirements of various stakeholders.

One of the best examples of confidence in the ANS process is Congress's 1996 passage of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act. This law requires federal agencies to increase their reliance upon—and participation in—the voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), an agency of the Department of Commerce, recently reported that the number of federal government agencies and cabinet-level departments making use of voluntary consensus standards in new or revised regulations in fiscal year 2000 was more than double the number reported the previous year.

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