



ISOT Guidance Note 005 – ANSI's Obligation to Vote in ISO

Voting is one of the key responsibilities of an ANSI accredited U.S. TAG and one of ANSI's obligations as a P-member of an ISO committee. The positions and comments developed by U.S. TAGs help drive the development of ISO standards, and more importantly give U.S. stakeholders the opportunity to influence the content of these well-known and well-respected global standards.

To ensure regular input from participating members in an ISO committee, the current ISO Directives state that if a P-member of an ISO committee fails to vote on proposal, enquiry or approval stage ballots, that P-member may be downgraded to an O-member.

ISO's Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) actively monitors voting performance and sends out daily notices of all missed votes to national bodies. If a national body does not provide an acceptable explanation for failing to meet their voting obligation, they will be automatically downgraded to O-membership in that committee for a period of 12 months. The ISO/CS decision is final and not subject to appeal.

This approach may have serious repercussions for U.S. participation in ISO committees. In the past, when a member body failed to vote on a DIS-level document, ISO would take into consideration its overall voting performance (across all ISO committees) when determining whether to downgrade a country from a P- to O-member on a committee. Under the current approach, countries are reviewed based on their voting performance for all ballots, and ISO will review the national member body's participation on a committee-by-committee basis.

ANSI's ISO Team (ISOT) also actively monitors U.S. voting performance and works with ISO to troubleshoot any issues and ensure that our P-memberships are not downgraded. ISOT does research each missed vote and reaches out to U.S. TAGs whenever a vote is missed. U.S. TAG Leaders should respond to this outreach to let ISOT know if there are any issues that can be addressed in order to improve the U.S. voting performance.

What this means to you as an ISO Committee Manager:

As an ISO Committee Manager, it is always good to remind your P-members of upcoming deadlines. For NWIP ballots that you issue to the committee, you can go into the balloting portal and see who has responded. We also recommend that you remind your P-members of the voting requirements and encourage them to reply to any missed vote notifications they receive from ISO.

What this means to you as a U.S. TAG Secretary:

As a U.S. TAG Secretary, you are in charge of the U.S. TAG and responsible for managing the U.S. TAG's voting and commenting.

Below is how we would recommend a U.S. TAG handle a vote. As a reminder, these are the typical voting timeframes:

- NWIP – 8-12 weeks
- CD – 8-16 weeks
- DIS – 12 weeks
- FDIS – 8 weeks

As an example, let's look at a 12 week NWIP ballot.

Week 1: When you receive an alert from ISO that a NWIP has been issued, you may wish to conduct a preliminary review and first send the NWIP to your U.S. TAG Chair and maybe key U.S. TAG Members (i.e. those whose organizations may be more closely affected by the development) for about a week. These are the people who are most likely going to be leading the U.S. involvement on the work item and can point to key parts of the outline / document that the U.S. TAG Members may want to pay close attention. They may also be able to provide a recommended position or some key items to think about during the review period. As U.S. TAG Secretary, you can then communicate these points to the full U.S. TAG when you send the document out for review.

Weeks 2-5: Once you have information from the key U.S. TAG Members; circulate the document for a 2-4 week review by the full U.S. TAG Membership to collect comments. During this time it is also a good idea for you to schedule a U.S. TAG meeting either in person or via webinar to review all the comments from the U.S. TAG Members once the review period closes.

Weeks 6-7: After you close the initial commenting period, collate the comments and provide them to the U.S. TAG Chair and key players. This will allow them to be prepared and able to answer any questions during your U.S. TAG meeting. This is also the time you should hold your U.S. TAG meeting that you previously scheduled.

Weeks 8-11: Once your U.S. TAG meeting takes place, you'll have a good idea of how much additional time you need. If the work item is not controversial, you might be pretty close to being ready to send the ballot form and comments to ISOT. If it is controversial, you still have several weeks to work out additional issues and hold meetings if necessary.

Week 12: Send the U.S. TAG position to ISOT.

ANSI requests that you send the U.S. TAG consensus position and relevant form to ISOT as soon as possible but at least 1 week prior to the deadline. Please note that ANSI will not enter a position without hearing from the U.S. TAG. So even if the U.S. TAG position is to abstain – let us know! When ISOT receives the U.S. TAG vote, we must do the following:

- Verify that it's from an official U.S. TAG Leader
- Double-check that all required ballot questions are answered
- Ensure that the comments are correctly formatted and in the ISO comments template
- Confirm the comments are consistent with ANSI policy and procedures

Sending in the vote 1 week early allows ISOT to complete our review and interface with U.S. TAG Secretaries, if necessary.

Please note that ISOT can accept U.S. TAG positions at any time prior to the deadline. For ballots we have not received we will send you a reminder about a month before the deadline and then again a few days before if we have still not heard from you. Sometimes we will even call you! Please note we only send reminders for votes we have not received. If we are contacting you for a ballot you believe you've sent us, please contact ISOT right away.

As U.S. TAG Secretary, it's very important that you keep in mind the ISO deadline. All U.S. TAG positions should be submitted to ISOT no later than close of business (4:00 pm EST) on the vote due date. The ISO balloting portal is programmed to shut down after the vote closes, so we are simply unable to submit a vote after the due date. Positions sent to ISOT after the deadline will likely not be counted by the committee.

ISOT will continue to monitor all U.S. TAG voting performance. Should we find that U.S. TAGs are missing votes, ANSI will reach out to them so that we may work together to ensure that ANSI is not subject to any disciplinary action by ISO and ANSI does not lose P-membership standing in any ISO committees. It is important that you reply to any missed vote notifications that you receive from ISOT in a timely manner.

You can find a copy of commonly used balloting forms in the "ISOT Voting Resources" folder on ISOT's SharePoint site (share.ansi.org/isot). Please ensure that you complete the correct form for the ballot, including comments where required. The ISO server does not accept incomplete votes.

About the ANSI ISO Team (ISOT)

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is the U.S. member body to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). To ensure a strong and effective U.S. voice in international standardization, the ANSI ISO Team (ISOT) acts as the primary interface for U.S. Stakeholders—between ANSI-accredited U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (U.S. TAGs) and their related ISO Committees, and as the main contact for ANSI-delegated U.S. held ISO secretariats.

ISOT daily operations include monitoring and recording of ISO documents, processing votes on behalf of U.S. TAGs, accrediting delegates to attend international meetings, nominating experts to participate on working groups, coordination with key group such as the ANSI ISO Forum (AIF), ANSI ISO Council (AIC), and the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB), administering ANSI Virtual Technical Advisory Groups (VTAGs), facilitating training programs, among many other functions. In addition to daily responsibilities, ISOT is available to assist with any committee specific issues U.S. TAGs or U.S. held secretariats may be facing. ISOT staff is well versed in the ISO procedures, ANSI International Procedures, and has experience in all aspects of the ISO process.

For organizations that are new to ISO or want additional support with ISO related activities, ANSI's ISOT staff provides hands-on, practical guidance on all aspects of administration of U.S. TAGs or ISO Secretariats through its fee-based Enhanced Services program. For more information, contact isot@ansi.org.