INTRODUCTION

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) is a private, non-profit organization that administers and coordinates the U.S. voluntary standards and conformity assessment system. Founded in 1918, the Institute works in close collaboration with stakeholders from industry and government to identify and develop standards and conformance-based solutions to national and global priorities.

Together, standards and the conformity assessment measures that ensure their effective use impact more than 80% of global commodity trade, driving increases in efficiency, open markets, and reduced costs. ANSI’s U.S. leader in fostering that potential for the benefit of businesses across every industry and consumers around the world. ANSI is not itself a standards developing organization. Rather, the Institute oversees the development and use of thousands of standards and guidelines by accrediting the procedures of standards developers and approving their documents as American National Standards. As an accreditation body, the Institute assesses the competence of these organizations — as well as conformity assessment bodies in a variety of disciplines — in assuring marketplace trust and confidence that goods and services meet standards’ requirements.

Representing the diverse interests of more than 270,000 companies and organizations and 30 million professionals, ANSI provides a neutral forum for collaboration between the private and public sectors. ANSI empowers organizations to strengthen their position in the global economy, while helping to ensure the safety and health of consumers and the protection of the environment.

ANSI MISSION

To enhance the global competitiveness of U.S. business and the U.S. quality of life by promoting and facilitating voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems, and safeguarding their integrity.

WHY ARE STANDARDS AND CONFORMANCE SO IMPORTANT?

Behind the scenes, standards make everyday life work. They establish quality and performance specifications for products, processes, personnel, and systems. Voluntary consensus standards are those developed through a process where all views are considered, and affected parties (including government, consumers, and business) have reached consensus on the contents. Hundreds of standards-developing organizations (SDOs) and consortia are engaged in the creation and maintenance of voluntary consensus standards used in virtually every industry sector. These SDOs — and the experts who populate their committees — work to enhance quality of life and improve the competitiveness of U.S. businesses operating in the global marketplace.

Conformity assessment is a vital link between standards that define product characteristics and the products themselves. It provides demonstration that a product, process, system, person, or service fulfills the requirements identified in a specific standard. It can verify whether a particular product meets a given level of quality or safety. And it can provide information about the product’s characteristics, the consistency of those characteristics, and the performance of the product. Testing, inspection, and auditing of products and management systems is as important as the standard in ensuring that products and systems are safe and perform as expected.

What Is ANSI?

AN OVERVIEW

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DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

Government Outreach and the Public-Private Partnership

One of the great strengths of the U.S. standardization system is its collaborative working relationship between the public and private sectors that fosters solutions for national priorities. With a long history as a trusted, neutral, ANSI plays a key role in facilitating that public-private partnership. The Institute works closely with industry and government and enables information exchange and access among standards developing organizations and public-sector leaders, agencies, and legislators.

ANSI works with its members to create outreach programs to legislators, to increase understanding of the private-sector standards and conformance community among agencies, and to provide testimony when requested by legislators or committees. Among the Institute’s value-added programming is a series of congressional briefings, the monitoring of legislative issues, and topical events for collaborative discussions on Capitol Hill.

Accreditation Services

Qualifying conformity assessment programs and ensuring their acceptance by government agencies, the private sector, and the public promotes international trade and helps ensure that products, services, and systems comply with standards. ANSI accredits conformity assessment bodies to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and ISO/IEC 17065 to ensure that accredited organizations are competent to deliver a range of conformity assessment services. ANSI accredits the following programs:

- Standardization Awareness Certification (SAC) provided by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- Accreditation of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) provided by the Accreditation Services Inc. (ASI)
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International Engagement

ISO, IEC, and Other Standardization Organizations

Strong U.S. leadership in international standardization is critical for continued competitiveness in the global economy. Among the efforts that strengthen that position, ANSI serves on the U.S. member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) via the U.S. National Committee (USNC), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) via the U.S. Telecommunication Administration (USTA). The USTB represents U.S. interests in standards development at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT). The Institute represents U.S. interests in the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS), and the Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS).

ANSI accredits U.S. TAGs to ISO and IEC committees to represent U.S. interests in their respective technical committees, and serves on ISO and IEC working groups. ANSI also serves as a liaison to regional standardization organizations (CEN, CENELEC, ETSI); serves as a liaison to regional administrators, and serves as a liaison to international standardization organizations (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) via ETSI). ANSI provides representatives to ISO and IEC technical committees and subcommittees.

American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

The U.S. National Standards System

To help make standards development in the U.S. as efficient and open as possible, the Institute establishes standards and site-licensing agreements that serve both the industry and the public. ANSI accredits standards developing organizations (SDOs) against a set of criteria to ensure openness, balance, due process, and consensus in standards development – American National Essential Requirement. The Institute does not develop standards itself, rather ANSI-SDOs must develop their documents for approval as American National Standards (ANS). An ANSI document that has been sponsored by an ANSI accredited ISO and then approved by ANSI Board of Standards Review as meeting certain criteria regarding due process in its development.

ANSI’s ISO accreditation and ANSI approval processes work in concert to safeguard the value of the ANSI designation and ANSI’s impartial audits ensure the integrity of this system. As of 2020, there are more than 15,000 American National Standards, comprising the work of thousands of experts from hundreds of SDOs representing every industry sector.

Conformity Assessment Programs

Quality conformity assessment programs enhance confidence and trust in products, services, and systems, and are critical to competitiveness. ANSI’s standards development system is the “public-private partnership” – the cooperative relationship between the private and public sectors to identify gaps in existing standards and to develop and maintain the standards needed to fill those gaps.

These programs are increasingly specified by not just private sectors but local, state, and federal governments to determine compliance of organizations that:

- Certify products, processes, personnel, services, and systems
- Validate or verify environmental impact assertions, labels, or declarations
- Issue education and training certificates

ANSI also serves the marketplace in partnership with affiliates ANSI-ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANSI-ANSI National Accreditation Board), which accredits testing and calibration labs, inspection bodies, reference material producers, and systems management certification bodies.

MEMBERSHIP

Crossing nearly all industries, sectors, and disciplines, the ANSI federation of members comprises thousands of representatives—companies, organizations, trade associations, government agencies, academia, international bodies, and various consumer and labor groups. The Institute works to coordinate this diverse constituency’s efforts to develop and implement standards and conformity assessment systems that strengthens the competitiveness of U.S. business in the global marketplace.

Member Forums and Events

Bringing together the collective voices of the ANSI federation in a key role of the Institute’s membership activity. Member Forums provide a venue for exchanging thoughts and experiences on critical standardization issues, and the opportunity to network with other company, Government, and Organizational members.

The Consumer Interest Forum promotes the education of consumer and labor groups. The Institute works to coordinate government agencies, academia, international bodies, and other organizations to get together on topics of interest to the entire community.

Benefits of ANSI Membership

- The ability to influence technical and policy developments in standards and conformance processes
- Access to global networking opportunities
- Opportunity to influence ANSI’s strategic positions and impact U.S. national and international positions
- Communications on key policy information and government affairs support
- Help with U.S. national standards and conformance, trade, and technical issues
- Training opportunities and updated information
- Discount on standards and site-licensing agreements
- Professional development and training opportunities

STANDARDS RESOURCES

ANSI Webstore

As the most comprehensive resource for standards from U.S. and International bodies, ANSI’s webstore enables users to:

- Search for standards from over 300 publishers by keyword or document number
- Purchase standards packages covering key industry areas

www.ansi.org/webstore

Site Licenses

ANSI Site Licenses provide convenient, cost-effective access to thousands of standards delivered at the right time, to the right place, and to all the right people. When standards need to be shared, when access to standards data is critical to business needs, and when an organization is looking for a competitive edge, customized ANSI Site Licenses are the perfect solution.

www.ansi.org/site-license

For more information on these and many other ANSI programs and activities, visit:

www.ansi.org