



# What Is ANSI?

AN OVERVIEW





## 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, helping to increase efficiency, open markets, and reduce costs. And ANSI is the 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 125,000 companies and organizations and 3.5 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 assure 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.

# DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

## Government Outreach and the Public-Private Partnership

One of the great strengths of the U.S. approach to standards and conformance is the “public-private partnership” – the cooperative working relationship between the public and private sectors that fosters solutions for national priorities. With a long history as a trusted, neutral forum, ANSI plays a key role in facilitating that robust partnership. The Institute bridges the gap between 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 legislative committees. Among the Institute’s vehicles for government outreach are congressional briefings, the monitoring of legislative issues, and topical events for collaborative discussions on Capitol Hill.

## Standards Coordination

Responding to national priorities and areas requiring cross-sector collaboration are key focuses for ANSI’s activities. The Institute establishes ongoing standards panels, collaboratives, and partnerships as well as timely workshops to address standardization needs. These initiatives coordinate the efforts of the private and public sectors to identify gaps in existing standards and make recommendations for future work. They rely on the cooperation of volunteers from across industries and sectors.

Recent areas of standards coordination activity include:

- Energy efficiency
- Electric vehicles
- Homeland security
- Smart cities
- Service economy
- Nanotechnologies
- Cybersecurity
- Nuclear energy



[www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org)

# 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 efforts that strengthen that position, ANSI serves as the U.S. member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) via the U.S. National Committee (all IEC activities are undertaken by the USNC, a committee of ANSI), the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC), and the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT); and a member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC). The Institute represents U.S. interests in work with the European standardization organizations (CEN, CENELEC, ETSI); serves as a liaison to regional standardization organizations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East; and fosters bilateral agreements with national standards bodies.

With the support of dedicated volunteers and experts across all industries, ANSI participates in almost the entire technical program of both ISO and the IEC, and administers many key committees, U.S. Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) and international Secretariats.

ANSI accredits U.S. TAGs to ISO committees, and delegates ISO and IEC committee Secretariats to appropriate U.S. organizations. And to further strengthen the U.S.

voice and promote participation, ANSI offers guidance and support services to members serving as U.S. and USNC TAG Administrators and ISO and IEC committee Secretariats.

## International Trade Policy and Market Access

Assisting members and stakeholders with international trade issues affecting their business is another way ANSI fosters U.S. competitiveness. Services can include compliance and market access facilitation, policy advocacy, and help with standards and conformance issues in China, India, and other regions. The Institute’s StandardsPortal provides free online information on standards and conformance requirements to facilitate trade between the U.S. and a number of its largest trading partners.



[www.StandardsPortal.org](http://www.StandardsPortal.org)



# ACCREDITATION SERVICES

## American National Standards

To help make standards development in the U.S. an equitable and open process

that serves both industry and the public good, ANSI accredits standards developing organizations (SDOs) against a set of criteria to assure openness, balance, due process, and consensus in standards development – ANSI's *Essential Requirements*.

The Institute does not develop standards itself; rather, ANSI-accredited SDOs may submit their documents for approval as American National Standards (ANS). An ANS is a document that has been sponsored by an ANSI-accredited SDO and then approved by ANSI's Board of Standards Review as meeting certain criteria regarding due process in its development.

ANSI's SDO accreditation and ANS approval processes work in tandem to safeguard the value of the ANS designation, and ANSI's impartial audits oversee the integrity of this system. To date, there are more than 11,000 American National Standards, comprising the work of thousands of experts from hundreds of SDOs representing every industry sector.

[www.ansi.org/psa](http://www.ansi.org/psa)

## Conformity Assessment Activities

Quality conformity assessment programs enhance confidence and trust in market transactions. ANSI administers a broad portfolio of third-party accreditation programs that recognize the competence of a range of conformity assessment bodies in accordance with guidelines and requirements defined in international standards.

These programs are increasingly specified by local, state, and federal governments, and include organizations that:

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

ANSI also serves the marketplace via the affiliate ANAB (ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board) brand, which accredits testing and calibration labs, inspection bodies, reference material producers, and management systems and certification bodies. And ANSI and ANAB operate a joint program to accredit conformity assessment bodies providing certification under the Superior Energy Performance (SEP) program.

[www.ansi.org/accreditation](http://www.ansi.org/accreditation)

# EDUCATION & TRAINING

Designed for newcomers and longtime standards professionals alike, ANSI's education and training programs offer a range of services that promote understanding of and participation in standards activities, and maximize the benefits of getting involved. The Institute's instructor-led and web-based training programs provide guidance on the national and international standards development processes. ANSI's Committee on Education offers opportunities and free resources for K-12 and university students and faculty, helping to bring standardization into the classroom and show the next generation its importance.

[www.ansi.org/education](http://www.ansi.org/education)

[www.ansi.org/students](http://www.ansi.org/students)

## StandardsLearn.org

Providing anyone interested with an easy-to-access introduction to standards and conformity assessment activities, ANSI's StandardsLearn website offers free, self-paced e-learning resources. A variety of courses highlight the value and importance of standards and compliance programs in the U.S. and globally, and present clear summaries of key organizations and processes of the standardization system. And a series of case studies illustrates the real-world application of standards and conformance.



[www.standardslearn.org](http://www.standardslearn.org)

# MEMBERSHIP

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

## Member Forums and Events

Bringing together the collective expertise of the ANSI federation is a key focus of the Institute's membership activities. Member Forums provide a venue for exchange of insights 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 consumers regarding ANSI and the standards development community, and offers engagement opportunities for representatives of consumer organizations, industry, and government. Periodic Joint Member Forum meetings and special events like the annual World

Standards Week conference invite ANSI members from across all groups to get together on topics of interest to the entire community.



## Benefits of ANSI Membership

- The ability to influence technical and policy developments and optimize market position via access to global standards and conformance, trade, and regulatory bodies
- Cross-industry global networking opportunities
- Opportunity to influence ANSI's strategic positions and impact U.S. national and international positions
- Communications on key public policy information and government affairs support
- Help with international standards and conformance, policy, and trade issues
- Easy access to standards and updated information
- Discounts on standards and site-licensing agreements
- Professional development and training opportunities

[www.ansi.org/membership](http://www.ansi.org/membership)



# STANDARDS RESOURCES

## ANSI Webstore

As the most comprehensive source for standards from U.S. and international developers, ANSI's webstore enables users to easily:

- Search for standards from over 200 publishers by keyword or document number
- Purchase standards packages covering key industry areas

[webstore.ansi.org](http://webstore.ansi.org)

## 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.

[webstore.ansi.org/SiteLicense](http://webstore.ansi.org/SiteLicense)

## NSSN

Developed by ANSI with support from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the NSSN search engine provides information on over 300,000 standards from a wide range of U.S. and international standards developers. [www.nssn.org](http://www.nssn.org)

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

[www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org)



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[www.ansi.org](http://www.ansi.org)

# 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.



An ANSI affiliate organization, Workcred is strengthening the workforce by improving the credentialing system, ensuring its ongoing relevance, and preparing employers, workers, educators, and governments to use it effectively. [www.workcred.org](http://www.workcred.org)



A joint initiative of ANSI and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Standards Alliance provides training and support for developing regions' capacity-building efforts in standards and conformance. [standardsalliance.ansi.org](http://standardsalliance.ansi.org)



A community-wide partnership administered by ANSI, Standards Boost Business is showing the world how standardization can help companies in every sector increase efficiency and strengthen their bottom line. [www.standardsboostbusiness.org](http://www.standardsboostbusiness.org)