



# Shaping Tomorrow's Built Environment Today

## CONSENSUS STANDARDS: EXPERT SOLUTIONS TO MEET GLOBAL NEEDS

### THE ISSUE

*Consensus standards developed in the voluntary sector are essential for a sound global economy and to facilitate global commerce. Standards foster building technology innovation by providing a transparent baseline and needed metrics for assessing how that technology can impact building design and performance. They are necessary for comparing technologies in the expanding global marketplace. US Federal policy recognizes the value of voluntary consensus standards by requiring their use in regulations when consistent with agency policy and appropriate for agency purposes<sup>1</sup>.*

Voluntary consensus standards are developed through the participation of any and all interested and affected stakeholders including manufacturers, users, and representatives of government and academia. Standards accreditors such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)<sup>2</sup>, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) follow several principles such as including consensus, openness, balance, transparency, and due process, and sure that designated standards development organizations follow these principles and processes.

### ASHRAE'S ROLE

ASHRAE develops and publishes robust standards; many of which are adopted into building codes. ASHRAE standards establish recommended practice in the areas of indoor air quality, energy conservation and management, high-performance green buildings, and others. ASHRAE is one of only six standards-developing organizations in the US that can self-certify that its standards have followed ANSI's procedures. ASHRAE also serves on US Technical Advisory Groups (TAGS) for ISO Committees and in the role of international secretariat for ISO Technical Committees to help ensure that ASHRAE views are represented. These standards are supported by technical committees that develop publications and educational materials to assist in the application of ASHRAE standards.

### ASHRAE'S VIEW

Since voluntary consensus standards are used widely at all levels of government, it is important that the needs of government are addressed in ASHRAE standards. If not, the standards cannot be adopted and used, or must undergo time-consuming and costly revision.

Recommendations for government participation in the development and use of consensus standards for the built environment:

- Legislative and Executive Branch entities should support voluntary consensus standards in laws and regulations.
- Agencies should work with standards developers and industry to identify situations where societal interests could be addressed through the use of voluntary consensus standards and work together for common solutions.
- Governments should continue to foster and support the unique character and strengths of the public-private partnership in standards development as they pursue trade and other international agreements, regulatory harmonization, and legislative and regulatory approaches.
- Governments should support policies, both domestically and internationally, which ensure the continued ownership and control of the copyrights and trademarks of standards developers, or develop other mechanisms to cover the costs and value of these standards.
- Government agencies should increase participation in the development of voluntary consensus standards, by encouraging government experts to participate, through release time and expenses incurred.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-113) (NTTAA) and OMB Circular A-119