



# American National Standards

*value of the ANS designation*





## hallmarks of the ANS process

An **American National Standard** (ANS) is a document that has been sponsored by an ANSI-Accredited Standards Developer, achieved consensus, met ANSI's *Essential Requirements*, and been approved by the Institute.

The hallmarks of this process ensure that American National Standards are developed in a manner that is equitable, accessible, and responsive:

- Participation is open to all interested stakeholders
- Balance of interests shall be sought
- Consensus must be reached by representatives from materially affected and interested parties in an environment that is free from dominance by any party
- Standards are required to undergo public reviews during which any member of the public may comment
- Comments from the consensus body and public review period must be responded to in writing
- All unresolved objections, attempts at resolution, and substantive changes to text are provided to the ANS consensus body for review prior to final vote
- An appeals process through the standards developer to address procedural concerns is required





## *public and national benefit*

From the very first American National Standard (ANS) on pipe threads to work that is underway today to meet emerging needs and priorities, ANSI-approved standards provide tremendous benefit to society and the global economy. This work spans a broad spectrum of industries: from nanotechnology and energy efficiency to telecommunications and the rapidly expanding service sector, the reach and influence of the standardization community is pervasive.

Participation by a standards developer in the ANS process signifies a commitment to the creation of high-quality, market-driven standards in an open environment characterized by due process and ANSI's neutral third party oversight. ANS set benchmarks for quality and performance that help to protect the public interest and foster commerce by influencing the design, manufacture, marketing, distribution, and safe use of products and processes worldwide.



## *market recognition*

Success is measured by recognition, usage, and acceptance.

By reflecting generally accepted technology, ANS dramatically increase market efficiency by providing a basis upon which buyers and sellers agree to certain product and service parameters.

For example, in the information technology sector, standards are relied upon to assure the interoperability of devices and systems. Without ANS, unnecessary inefficiencies and costs could result.

Similarly, U.S. consumer product safety standards are widely used as models for other national, regional, and international efforts. Products and services that comply with ANS can be expected to gain greater market recognition, acceptance, and use, thereby benefitting both consumers and implementers of the standards.



## *fairness*

ANSI-accredited standards developers conduct their work in a manner that is open to public scrutiny and that provides every stakeholder with an opportunity to be heard, without dominance by any party.

Adherence to the *ANSI Essential Requirements: Due process requirements for American National Standards* results in a level playing field for all stakeholders, contributing to the development of standards that benefit those who participate in the process, the general public, and the nation.

ANSI-Accredited Standards Developers offer processes that meet the Institute's requirements for:

- openness
- balance
- lack of dominance
- due process
- consensus

Accreditation by ANSI as a standards developer represents a public statement of the value placed on an open and equitable consensus development process.

Standards developers that choose to participate in this arena are dedicated to advancing voluntary consensus standardization interests within the U.S. and globally.

Due process is key to ensuring that American National Standards are developed in an environment that is fair, accessible, and responsive to the needs of affected stakeholders.

All ANSI-Accredited Standards Developers and all American National Standards are subject to ANSI's neutral third-party oversight via the ANSI Audit Program. Other checks and balances in place include appeals provisions, periodic review of procedures, and regular attestations by developers of compliance with ANSI's procedural requirements.



## mark of quality

Quality is a key facet of value for any potential customer purchasing goods or using services. Although there are different definitions of quality, by any name it has been documented as a determining factor for buyers and users of American National Standards.

If “conformance to requirements” is the benchmark for quality, ANSI’s *Essential Requirements* provide confidence in a due process that includes openness, balance, public notification, coordination, consideration of views, consensus, and appeals.

For those who see quality as “fitness for intended use,” thousands of ANS have been developed and approved with testaments to their credibility, consistency, and acceptance.

Where “meeting or exceeding customer expectations” is the definition of quality, the ANS designation has been characterized by such terms as “integrity,” “level playing field,” “broad support,” and “responsive to market needs.”



## legal safeguards

Compliance with the ANS process requires an open and due process-based system that may help standards developers avoid antitrust and tort liability problems. ANSI’s neutral oversight through the Audit Program and Board of Standards Review establishes credibility for the ANS designation while supporting a system where all parties — including those with technical comments on content — have the right to participate in standards development.

The *Standards Development Organization Advancement Act of 2004* extends certain protections, including a limitation on antitrust liability, to organizations whose procedures incorporate openness, balance, due process, appeals, and consensus.



## a tool for government

One of the best examples of confidence in the ANS designation is the *National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995* (NTTAA), Public Law 104-113.

This law requires all federal government agencies to use, wherever feasible, standards developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies in lieu of developing government-unique standards or regulations. The NTTAA also requires government agencies to participate in standards development processes, given that such involvement is in keeping with an agency’s mission and budget priorities.

OMB Circular A-119, which provides guidance to federal agencies on the implementation of the NTTAA, recognizes that the attributes of voluntary consensus standards bodies include openness, balance, consensus, due process, and appeals — all the hallmarks of the ANS process. According to the circular, voluntary consensus standards help the government by:

- increasing operational efficiency,
- reducing regulatory compliance and procurement costs,
- avoiding duplication of effort caused by having separate private sector and government-unique solutions,
- enabling the government to take advantage of private sector technology and expertise in establishing standards that serve national needs, and
- contributing to economic prosperity and growth.

Since the NTTAA became law, there has been a sizable increase in government reliance on voluntary consensus standards — from the 9-11 Commission’s endorsement of an ANS for disaster and emergency management to the *Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008*, which mandates compliance with ANS for all-terrain vehicles and toy safety.

