

STANDARDS WRITING


101

NEW STANDARDS

/by Felicia Quinzi/

YOUR INDUSTRY OR SERVICE SECTOR
NEEDS A NEW STANDARD, BUT
WHERE DO YOU BEGIN TO
GET IT WRITTEN AND
APPROVED?

**R E A D
O N .**



Writing a new standard can seem a daunting task, especially if you have never before thought of yourself as an author. However, ASTM, a consensus organization that wholly promotes collaborative efforts, offers many tools to get you started and see you through until the end or, at least, until someone votes negative.

ToolBox

“Search for Individual Standards” Page: To find out if a standard is already developed in the area you want, go to www.astm.org (click on the [ASTM Store](#), then on [Search for Individual Standards](#) and do a keyword search).

“Request for the Development of a New Standard” Form: Go to www.astm.org (click on [Technical Committees/Membership](#), then on [Standards Development Tools](#)) or contact your staff manager.

Form and Style for ASTM Standards: Go to www.astm.org (click on [Technical Committees/Membership](#), then on [Standards Development Tools](#)) or contact your staff manager.

Interactive Standards Development Forums: To develop standards online, see the ASTM Forums Web page (<http://astmforums20.micronexx.com>).

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- ▶ New Standard Development request form (Figure 1, see page 22);
- ▶ *Form and Style for ASTM Standards*, a.k.a. the “Blue Book”;
- ▶ Input from other experts;
- ▶ Access to the Internet (optional);
- ▶ Instructions for establishing an interactive forum on the ASTM Web site (optional);
- ▶ Your staff manager;
- ▶ A No. 2 pencil or a PC;
- ▶ A comfortable chair;
- ▶ Patience.

HOW GOOD IS MY IDEA?

The first step is to introduce the idea for a new standard to the appropriate subcommittee. The concept must fall under the subcommittee’s scope, first and foremost. The subcommittee should agree that the proposed activity is worthwhile, feasible, and needed. More importantly, verify that the standard you hope to write does not already exist under the jurisdiction of another committee or organization. Avoid duplication of effort and jurisdictional disputes!

To do this, do a keyword search of all approved ASTM standards on the ASTM Web site (see “Search for Individual Standards” in the ToolBox). If a standard turns up that sounds similar

to the one you are about to write, contact your staff manager for further information. In addition, your staff manager can assist in finding out whether your or another committee has a work in progress on a similar or related subject by searching draft standards under development in ASTM.

NEW STANDARD DEVELOPMENT FORM

The best way to ensure that an activity is appropriate is to complete the “Request for the Development of a New Standard” form (see ToolBox).

The subcommittee having jurisdiction over the proposed project should approve the development of the activity and the subcommittee chairman should subsequently sign the form. If you are between meetings, the chairman may sign the form on the assumption that there will be approval of the activity at the next meeting.

Filling out the form will trigger the crucial steps to be taken, such as (1) establishing a well-defined scope or objective; (2) identifying those who have expertise in a given area; (3) identifying those who need to be

made aware of, or invited to participate in, a given activity; (4) identifying the end users; (5) creating a task group representing all interests; (6) enabling the subcommittee to track a task group’s efforts; and (7) publicity.

Ideally, the task group would be formed under the subcommittee with

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a manageable number of members (approximately four to six) representing a balance of interests. Should this task group need to look outside of the ASTM subcommittee or committee for expertise, other members or individuals should be invited to participate.

NOTE—Task group members are not required to be members of ASTM.

JOINT TASK GROUPS

Coordination and cooperation are two of the most important ele-

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REQUEST FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW STANDARD

(COMPLETION OF THIS FORM IS REQUIRED FOR THE FORMATION OF A TASK GROUP TO DEVELOP A NEW STANDARD. SOME OF THE INFORMATION MAY NOT BE NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE AS DETERMINED BY YOUR SUBCOMMITTEE.)

SUBCOMMITTEE DESIGNATION (e.g. A01.22): _____ DATE: _____

TASK GROUP CHAIRMAN: _____

PHONE: (_____) _____ EMAIL: _____

ADDRESS (* only if non-ASTM member): _____

PROPOSED DRAFT DOCUMENT TITLE: _____

PROPOSED SCOPE: _____

IMPORTANT KEYWORDS that are not included above: _____

PROJECTED TARGET DATE for first subcommittee ballot: _____

EXPLAIN why the standard is needed and how it will be used (i.e. adopted by government agency, procurement, quality assurance): _____

List other ASTM Committees or key outside organizations that you feel should be informed of this activity: _____

LIST TASK GROUP MEMBERS ALONG WITH THEIR AFFILIATIONS:

NAME	AFFILIATION	NAME	AFFILIATION
1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

Are you interested in utilizing the **ASTM Web-Based Interactive Standards Development Forums?** (please check one) Yes No

APPROVED AT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON: _____ (date)

OR

APPROVED BY SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ON: _____ (date)

NOTE: If approved by the chairman between meetings, the task group will be approved by the subcommittee at their next meeting.

SIGNATURE OF SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN: _____

By completing this form, the task group chairman acknowledges that all copyrights to this document, as a draft and as an approved ASTM standard, are the sole and exclusive property of ASTM, in accordance with the Intellectual Property policies of the Society.

SIGNATURE OF TASK GROUP CHAIRMAN: _____

FORWARD COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COMMITTEE STAFF MANAGER

ments of standards development and maintenance. By coordinating openly with other members, a task group can bring together key stakeholders and receive input at the start of a project, rather than later on when much time and energy has been expended.

Furthermore, when a subcommittee identifies other subcommittees that should be represented on the task group, the subcommittee chairman should inform his or her staff manager. The manager will initiate coordination between the two or more subcommittees. Then, additional members will join the task group to represent the interests of the committees to which they belong. We call this a "joint task group." This could also be the case for representatives from organizations other than ASTM. The joint task group is a vehicle for individuals to communicate their interests.

PUBLICIZE!

If you are uncertain as to whether another committee or organization is interested in or may be impacted by your activity, publicize! Your staff manager can assist you with contacting the ASTM Corporate Communications Department.

HOW WILL THE STANDARD BE USED?

Doing the research up front will save time and energy. Ask questions of your subcommittee, such as: "Is it possible that the standard will be cited in a building code?" "Will a government agency or regulatory body adopt the standard?"

START WRITING

Start by writing "Draft #1" at the top of your first page. It is likely that there will be more than one or two drafts of the document and it is always interesting to keep track.

WHAT KIND OF STANDARD AM I?

Now is the time to reach for your Blue Book (*Form and Style for ASTM Standards*) and dust it off, or download the latest version (October 1999) from the Web site (see Toolbox). Review the definitions of test method,



specification, practice, guide and classification. By determining which type of standard you are writing, you will know which mandatory sections must be included in your document.

Once you know which sections you need, you can start with an outline, such as (in the case of a test method):

- Title;
- Scope—purpose of the standard, general information;

The draft will have become a consensus document created, refined, and agreed upon by the experts in the industry.

- Significance and Use—how the standard is to be applied, specific information;
- Apparatus;
- Materials;
- Procedure;
- Keywords for indexing purposes.

USING THE INTERNET

ASTM encourages the use of the Interactive Standards Development Forums, a Web-based standards development tool to which you have access 24 hours a day, seven days a week (see Toolbox). Through the Forums, a task group chairman can designate who has the ability to review and

comment on a draft. Headquarters assigns each task group member a password when a Forum is created. The task group members view not only the draft, but also each other's comments.

YOUR FIRST DRAFT GOES TO BALLOT

A first draft typically goes to a subcommittee ballot and receives its first round of comments and negatives. This is actually very positive and productive for the task group.

If, as mentioned above, a joint task group is working on the draft because another subcommittee needs to be involved, an "informational ballot" is an option. In addition to balloting within the subcommittee with jurisdiction, a different subcommittee may receive an informational ballot. Comments received on the informational ballot are handled in the same manner as a negative or comment on the official ballot.

A STANDARD IS BORN

Maybe it seemed as though there were a few obstacles. Perhaps you thought there was too much paperwork. However, the draft is approved and published as an ASTM standard. The draft will have become a consensus document created, refined, and agreed upon by the experts in the industry. The standard can be used worldwide in the international marketplace and adopted by countries in places where you have never been. We think that it's worth it. //

Felicia Quinzi is a manager in the Technical Committee Operations Division.