
TECHNICAL DATA

NFPA STANDARDS MAKING PROCEDURE

NFPA (National Fire Protection Association)

NFPA is a standards writing organization, founded in 1896 and dedicated to the concept of voluntary consensus standards writing. While it is not an enforcing agency, NFPA enjoys a unique reputation and its standards have been adopted by all levels of government, in many cases giving the standards the force of law. One of the most notable features of the NFP standards making process is that it is a full, open, consensus-based process. All NFPA standards are revised and updated every three to five years to ensure that it is kept current with new fire protection knowledge and technologies. The NFPA process requires “balanced” technical committees and is open to anyone who wishes to participate. These committees are appointed by Standards Council and appointments are based on such factors as technical expertise, professional standing, commitment to public safety and the ability to bring to the table the point of view of a category of interested people or groups. No more than one third of any committee can come from the same interest category and every NFPA standard includes a listing of the committee members and their categories.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

CORRELATING COMMITTEE

- In 1995 the NFPA standards writing committee was reorganized, and the Technical Correlating Committee was added. Subsequently, the name was shortened to just Correlating Committee
- The scope of the CC is to insure that there is consistency between NFPA documents; Correlating Committees is not intended to write documents, but to review them.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

- NFPA Technical Committees serve as the principal consensus bodies responsible for developing and updating standards. There are over 200 Technical Committees in existence.
- Usually a maximum of 30 voting members per Technical Committee; however this number can be increased in order to provide technical expertise as necessary.
- No more than 1/3 of the TC members can come from any special interest category. Categories include manufacturer, user, consumer, special expert, labor, insurer, installer/maintenance, enforcer, and research/testing agencies.

STANDARDS PROCEDURE

- * Standards are normally revised every three to five years and usually takes approximately two years to complete. Each revision cycle proceeds according to a published schedule which includes final dates for each stage in the standards development process.
- * Technical Committees solicit public input; public notices & requests for input are published in the NFPA Standards Development site, in NFPA publications and other appropriate media as determined by Standards Council.
- * All inputs must be addressed by Technical Committee Members and final disposition is by letter ballot, which requires a 2/3 Technical Committee vote for approval. The proposed first draft must then be balloted by Correlating Committee and requires a ¾ vote to move forward.
- * Once successfully balloted through both TC and TCC, committee actions and committee's justifications for the actions are published and a public comment period is open.
- * After published comment period, all public comments on the Committee's recommendations are considered and approvals on the actions taken as a result of public comments, (if any) once again require a 2/3 Technical Committee letter ballot approval, followed by a ¾ Technical Correlating Committee affirmative ballot.
- * All comments, committee action, and committee's justifications for the actions are published as a Second Draft and is once again made available to any interested parties.
- * At this stage, if there is a challenge to the document, the person who wishes to dispute the standard must file a **NITMAN**, which is NFPA jargon for Notice of Intent to File a Motion. If there is no **NITMAN** filed, the Second Draft bypasses the NFPA's annual meeting and goes directly to Standards Council. If there is a motion, the document is presented for debate at the annual meeting and the Association votes to either recommend the document as is to Standards Council, to amend the document, or send it back to Committee.
- * If recommended as is, there will be set period of time for complaints to be filed with the Standard's Council. If no complaints, the Standard's Council issues the Technical Committees recommendations as the latest edition of the standard.

NOTE: Interested parties are encouraged to visit the NFPA website: www.NFPA.org and to review How the Process works for a much more comprehensive explanation.