

DOE Technical Standards Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the difference between the generic word "standards" and the DOE term "technical standards"?

In many instances, the term "standards" is used as a generic term for all of the regulations, guidance, and information that we use in everyday practices and to do work. It generally includes all of the rules, laws, regulations, DOE Orders, national and international standards, and Federal standards. The term "technical standards" was established to identify the collection of those DOE documents that were being used purely for *technical* purposes. Technical standards are used in DOE to form the basis of a document hierarchy system where the technical standards themselves provide specific methods and techniques on "how to" implement the Department's requirements. However, the standards themselves are not mandatory for use until some higher tier document in the hierarchy makes them mandatory. This hierarchy is described for DOE activities in DOE M 251.1-1A, *Directives System Manual*.

How can I best obtain a "current" listing of DOE technical standards?

To get the most up-to-date listing of DOE technical standards, look on the Technical Standards Program (TSP) Home Page under the heading "Approved Standards."

Are the "adopted" non-Government standards (NGS) listed in Appendix B of DOE TSL-1 mandatory standards when used in DOE projects?

No. The term "adoption" relates only to the Technical Standards Program (TSP) and was established for the purpose of reporting in accordance with OMB Circular A-119. When the process was set up in 1992, there was an agreement that NGSs referenced in DOE Orders (whether mandatory or discretionary) would be considered to be "adopted" NGSs. Designating a particular NGS as mandatory for a DOE contractor is a contractual decision. That is, the mandatory designation is either imposed through a DOE Order or the M&O contract, or the contractor commits to the NGS in their safety analysis report or implementation plan and DOE accepts it.

If I find a non-Government standard (NGS) that nearly meets my needs, how do I fill in the missing elements?

There are, in order of preference, three methods to adapt an existing standard to fit your needs.

- You, or the DOE representative on the non-Government standards committee that created the standard, can participate in revising the document to address DOE needs. Words can be added to individual paragraphs; the words "as specified" can be added to the end of a requirement; or an appendix can be developed to address specific DOE additions, expectations, or modifications.
- You can obtain permission from the copyright holder to use specific paragraphs or sentences from the NGS in a new or revised DOE technical standard.
- You could develop a new DOE technical standard that uses the NGS as a primary reference but modifies the requirements to meet the needs of the Department or of the specific application.

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How can I find out who represents DOE on any non-Government standards committee, working group, or management board?

DOE-TSL-4, *Directory of DOE and Contractor Personnel Involved in Non-Government Standards Activities*, contains a listing of DOE employees and DOE contractors who participate in non-Government standards activities. This Directory was compiled from those participants who submitted form DOE F 1300.2 and from rosters supplied by non-Government standards bodies. DOE-TSL-4 is available on the Technical Standards Program (TSP) Home Page under the heading "Approved Standards."

How can I indicate my participation in non-Government standards activities?

You can document your participation in the development of non-Government standards or on management boards of voluntary standards bodies using DOE F 1300.2, "Record of Non-Government Standards Activity." This form was developed in response to a requirement in OMB Circular A-119 that requires all agencies of the Federal Government to report the number of Agency employee participations in non-Government standards activities. New participations, revisions of information previously submitted, or terminations of membership should be documented using this form. A copy of the form is available from (a) an attachment to DOE Order 252.1, (b) the Technical Standards Program Procedures, or (c) the Technical Standards Program (TSP) Home Page under the heading "News/Forms/Annual Report/Crosswalks" and then select "Forms."

What is the best way to find out the status of specific DOE technical standard projects?

Project registration number assignments and status are available on the Technical Standards Program (TSP) Home Page. You can find this information by clicking on "Registered Projects."

When is the development of a new DOE technical standard warranted?

In accordance with Public Law (PL) 104-113 and OMB Circular A-119, DOE organizations, sites and facilities preferentially use existing, suitable non-Government standards (voluntary consensus standards) for all DOE programs and applications. Once the need for a technical standard is identified, non-Government standards should be considered and used first; Government standards should be considered and used next; and lastly, a DOE technical standard should be developed and used only in the absence of an appropriate non-Government or Government standard or the inability of a voluntary standards organization to produce a standard on a schedule consistent with Department priorities.

What is the process for getting a new DOE technical standard developed?

First, make a list of reasons for needing such a document. Then, discuss that list with your line supervisor and verify that you have searched for appropriate existing voluntary consensus standards but have found none that are suitable. Once the two of you agree on the need, notify your Technical Standards Manager (TSM), who will assist you with the project registration process. You can find the name of your TSM on the Technical Standards Program (TSP) Home Page. If you have some questions about how to start the process, call the Technical Standards Program Office

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(TSPO). Further guidance is contained in the TSP procedure DOE-TSPP-2, "Establishing the Need for a Technical Standard." You can view the procedure on the TSP Home Page under the heading "Write or Revise a DOE Technical Standard." Additionally, copies of the procedure are available from the TSPO.

Once the need for a DOE technical standard has been identified, where can I go for help in the appropriate style to use in developing the standard?

A Style Guide containing guidance for the development or maintenance of DOE technical standards, handbooks, or technical standards lists is available on the Technical Standards (TSP) Home Page on the "Technical Standards Program Information" page.

What should I consider when developing a title for a DOE technical standard?

The title briefly states the subject of the document. When the document is listed in a database of documents, the titles can be searched for key words to locate documents that cover a selected subject matter. Consequently, the title should project the closest possible description of the document in as few words as possible. Words that are most likely to be used in electronic searches should be used. Words such as "standard", "handbook", "guide", "good practice", and references to other documents should not be used unless absolutely necessary to convey the contents of the document.

How can I obtain a document number for a new DOE technical standard?

Contact the Technical Standards Manager (TSM) of your headquarters office. A block of document identification numbers has been assigned to each Headquarters TSM, and the TSM is charged with issuing and controlling their use.

Sometimes I receive a draft of a DOE technical standard for review that is not accompanied by the Preparing Activity's (PA's) address or phone number. How can I obtain this information?

There are several possible routes to a PA's address:

- If the PA is a DOE employee, look up the information on the DOE Internet "Telephone Book" at: <http://www.hr.doe.gov/>.
- The phone numbers and Email addresses (when available) of all authors of DOE technical standards projects are listed under "Draft DOE Technical Standards" on the Technical Standards Program (TSP) Home Page.

Why is a Microsoft Word file needed when a document is sent to the Technical Standards Program Office (TSPO)? As the responsible Preparing Activity (PA), why can't I send a PDF file only?

A Microsoft Word file is needed because PDF files do not allow users to make changes. Occasionally, the PDF files we receive do not match the hard copies that the PA sends. One reason these copies might be mismatched is because the hard copy was printed from the Microsoft Word

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file before the PDF was created. When PDF files are created, changes can occur to the font type, font size, and document margins. In addition, a Microsoft Word file is needed to post the document on RevCom for TSP for review and comment.

What is the difference between a Reaffirmation Notice, a Change Notice and a Revision?

A Reaffirmation Notice indicates that no changes have been made to the technical standard since its original issue. The cover will be updated to reflect the reaffirmation date. A Change Notice indicates that changes have been made to the technical standard but do not exceed 25% of the pages of the document. Change Notices are used to correct typographical, spelling, and numerical errors as well as update the Preparing Activity and other minor details. A technical standard is revised when the document requires a technical change to the text or when other types of needed changes affect more than 25% of the pages of the document.

What is a "Topical Committee"?

Topical committees are groups of DOE and DOE contractor subject matter experts that are recognized by the Technical Standards Program (TSP). These committees are usually organized by specific technical areas that may have standards development, application or standardization implications for DOE. A list of the current Topical Committees can be found on the TSP Home Page.

How do I go about setting up a DOE Topical Committee?

You have a couple of options. Existing groups, e.g. TRADE Special Interest Groups, can become topical committees by expanding their current charter to reflect the requirements in DOE-TSPP-11 (DOE Technical Standards Program Topical Committees). TSPP-11 describes how topical committees are organized and recognized under the Technical Standards Program (TSP). It explains what the TSP expects from a DOE topical committee: preparation and review of technical standards, interfacing with voluntary standards organizations, and reporting to the TSP. Alternately, if a group within DOE identifies a need associated with a standards activity, they can form a topical committee. The usual procedure has been for them to first identify a membership for the committee, and then organize a workshop to explore the feasibility of forming the topical committee. If the workshop determines the need for the committee, those attending it can begin the formation of the committee themselves. The DOE Technical Standards Program Manager discussed expectations of DOE Topical Committees in a March 9, 1998 memorandum. The memo is available on the TSP Home Page.