

**Procedures for Organization, Development, and Maintenance of Challenge Course
Standards by the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT)**
**(Following the guidelines as designated in the *ANSI Essential Requirements: Due process
requirements for American National Standards*)**
**Revised version submitted February 2016, to comply with changes in the
*ANSI Essential Requirements***

1 General

These procedures apply to the development, approval, revision, reaffirmation, and withdrawal of consensus standards for the challenge course industry developed by the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) in accordance with the *ANSI Essential Requirements*.

Scope: ACCT's scope of standard involvement is to develop and maintain consensus standards for the challenge course industry.

2 Organization

2.1 Board of Directors.

ACCT is governed by an elected, voluntary Board of Directors (BOD) who are current members of the Association, each serving a three-year term per the ACCT bylaws. The number of Directors constituting the entire Board of Directors shall not be less than five (5) or more than twelve (12).

2.1.1 The ACCT Board of Directors or a combined industry association Standard Management Committee (hereinafter referred to as "SMC") shall be in place to manage and oversee the development and maintenance of the standard in accordance with these procedures.

ACCT (ASD) shall be the administrative contact for submission of PINS, BSR paperwork, and ANSI audit purposes.

2.2 The Secretariat.

The Association for Challenge Course Technology and its Board of Directors (ACCT BOD) or SMC is designated as the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall

- a) organize the Consensus Group.
- b) maintain ANSI accreditation in accordance with the *ANSI Essential Requirements*, including submission of the Consensus Group roster.
- c) oversee compliance with these procedures.

2.2.1 Administration.

The Secretariat shall be responsible for

- a) making administrative contact with ANSI for submission of standards and ANSI audit purposes.
- b) performing administrative work and support services, including arranging meetings, preparation and distribution of agendas, minutes, draft standards, and maintaining records.
- c) submitting proposed standards approved by the Consensus Group and any other required information to ANSI for review and approval as American National Standards.
- d) maintaining rosters of the Consensus Group and any Consensus Group Standards Committees and a list of standards for which the Consensus Group is responsible.
- e) distributing proposed standards, as initially proposed, from the Consensus Group Standards Committees to the Consensus Group.
- f) performing other administrative functions as required by these procedures.
- g) ensuring adherence to continuous maintenance of standards.

2.3 Consensus Group.

The Consensus Group shall be established by the Secretariat and will be responsible for

- a) reviewing standards proposed by the Standards Committees and making any changes to the proposed standards.
- b) voting on approval of American National Standards within its scope.
- c) complying with policy and procedures for interpretations of the standards developed by the Consensus Group.
- d) responding to requests for interpretations of the standard(s) developed by the Consensus Group.
- e) other matters requiring committee action as provided in these procedures.

3 Consensus Group Officers

A Chair and Vice-Chair shall be nominated by the individual members of the Consensus Group, subject to approval by a majority vote of the Consensus Group. Officer positions will be reviewed every two years, and a majority vote of the Consensus Group is required for approval. Each officer shall serve until a successor is selected and ready to serve. The Vice-Chair shall carry out the Chair's duties if the Chair is temporarily unable to do so. A secretary shall be provided by the Secretariat.

4 Consensus Group Membership

Membership on the Consensus Group is open to all interested parties having a direct and material interest in the activities of the Consensus Group and shall be sufficiently diverse to ensure reasonable balance without dominance by any single interest group.

4.1 Committee Membership. The Secretariat shall solicit for applications in public forums and/or from interested parties. Membership selection by the Consensus Group shall give consideration to

- a) the need for active participation by members of each interest group,
- b) the need for balance and the potential for dominance by members of a single interest group,
- c) the extent of interest expressed and the willingness to participate, and
- d) qualifications and ability to materially contribute to the work of the Consensus Group.

4.2 Application. Individuals seeking membership on the Consensus Group shall submit a written request to the Secretariat indicating their interest in the work of the Consensus Group and their qualifications, willingness to participate, and affiliations that might affect their classification. Applicants shall identify their interest category. (See *4.3 Interest Categories.*)

4.3 Interest Categories. All members of the Consensus Group shall be classified into interest categories, which, at a minimum, will include Vendors, Users, or General Interest representatives in accordance with the definitions listed below. Additional classifications can be added by the Consensus Group at their discretion. The definitions of any new classifications added will be made available to any interested party upon request.

- a) Vendor. This category includes representatives of interests directly involved in the construction of, training of, and inspection of challenge courses.
- b) User. This category includes representatives of interests directly involved in using challenge courses. Examples include, but are not limited to, schools and universities, camps, hospitals, outdoor education organizations, community service organizations, social service agencies, insurance agencies, and equipment suppliers.
- c) General Interest. This category includes representatives with a variety of perspectives that are neither vendors nor users. Examples include, but are not limited to, educators, researchers, regulatory agencies, technical societies (e.g. engineers), consumer groups, environmental groups, and non-profit organizations.

4.4 Processing Applications. The Secretariat shall promptly send all applications to the Consensus Group. The Consensus Group shall accept or reject all applications.

If space is unavailable on the Consensus Group (See *4.6 Consensus Group Size.*), applicants who are accepted shall be put into a queue for the next available position.

Rejected applicants shall have the right to appeal in accordance with Section 11, *Appeals*. In accepting or rejecting applicants, consideration shall be given to the following:

- a) the need for active participation by members of each interest group,
- b) the need for balance and the potential for dominance by members of a single interest group,
- c) the extent of interest expressed and the willingness to participate, and
- d) qualifications and ability to materially contribute to the work of the Consensus Group.

4.5 Balance. The standards development process shall have a balance of interests. Participants from diverse interest categories shall be sought with the objective of achieving balance. Criteria for balance are that

- a) no single-interest category constitutes more than one-third of the membership of the Consensus Group dealing with safety-related standards, or
- b) no single-interest category constitutes a majority of the membership of the Consensus Group dealing with other than safety-related standards.

Temporary imbalance can exist due to membership resignations, illnesses, or other unforeseen circumstances.

4.6 Consensus Group Size. The Secretariat shall consider and may recommend reasonable limits on the size of the Consensus Group. To ensure administrative manageability and promote active participation, the suggested maximum is twelve (12) and the suggested minimum is nine (9).

4.7 Review of Membership. The Secretariat shall review the membership list annually with respect to the criteria of this Section 4, *Membership*. Members are expected to fulfill obligations of active participation. Where a member is found in repeated default of these obligations, the Secretariat shall direct the matter to the Consensus Group for appropriate action, which may include termination of membership.

4.8 Membership Roster. The Secretariat shall maintain current and accurate Consensus Group and Standards Committee rosters and shall distribute the roster to the members of each group at least annually and otherwise on request. The roster shall be posted on the ACCT website and include the following:

- a) title of each committee and its designation
- b) scope of each committee
- c) Secretariat: name of organization, name of secretary, and address(es)
- d) officers: Chair and Vice-Chair
- e) member names, addresses, and business affiliation of members of each committee
- f) classification of each member in the Consensus Group
- g) an accounting of classifications in the Consensus Group: total of voting members and subtotals for each interest category
- h) for each Standards Committee: title, Chair, and names and addresses of all members

4.9 Standards Committees. Standards Committees shall be established by the Secretariat, as needed, or at the request of the Consensus Group, for the purpose of proposing standards and identifying modifications, clarifications, additions, and deletions in the standards.

4.9.1 Balance is not required for Standards Committees and shall be made up of from one (1) to ten (10) persons, as necessary.

4.9.2 Upon forming a new Standards Committee or adding new members to an existing Standards Committee, the Secretariat shall solicit for applications in public forums and/or from interested parties. Membership on Standards Committees is open to all persons who have expertise in the duties delegated to the Standards Committee.

4.9.3 Standards Committee chairpersons may not be members of the main Consensus Group and shall be appointed by the Secretariat or recommended by the members of the Standards Committee. Standards Committee Chairs shall be voted on by the Secretariat.

4.9.4 Standards Committee decision-making is based on consensus from all Standards Committee members present at meetings.

5 Meetings

Consensus Group meetings are held to conduct business, such as making assignments, receiving reports of work, considering draft standards, resolving differences among Standards Committees, and considering views and objections from any source.

5.1 Open Meetings. Meetings of the Consensus Group shall be open to all persons having a direct and material interest. At least four weeks notice of meetings shall be given by the Secretariat. The notice shall describe the purpose of the meeting and shall identify a readily available source for further information. An agenda shall be available and shall be distributed in advance of the meeting to members and to others expressing interest. The Secretariat may optionally maintain a permanent mailing list of other interests. Meetings shall be held at a convenient location or may be conducted by conference calls or by simultaneous video-linked locations.

5.2 Quorum. A majority of the entire authorized number of members of the Consensus Group shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If a quorum is not present, actions may be taken subject to confirmation by letter ballot or at a subsequent meeting.

6 Voting

6.1 Standards Development Votes. For votes related to standards development, each member of the Consensus Body shall vote one of the following positions:

a) affirmative

- b) affirmative, with comment
- c) negative, with reasons (the reasons for a negative vote shall be given and if possible should include specific wording or actions that would resolve the objection)
- d) abstain

6.2 Other Votes. For votes related to membership and office-related issues, each member of the Consensus Group shall vote one of the following positions:

- a) affirmative
- b) negative
- c) abstain

6.3 Voting Period. The voting period shall end four (4) weeks from the date of issue or as soon as all ballots are returned, whichever comes earlier. An extension may be granted at the Chair's option, when warranted.

A follow-up letter requesting immediate return of the ballot shall be sent, as appropriate, to members whose votes have not been received within ten (10) working days before the ballot closes.

6.4 Actions Requiring Approval by a Majority. The following actions require approval by a majority of the membership of the Consensus Group either at a meeting or by letter ballot:

- a) confirmation of officers
- b) recommendation of formation of a Standards Committee to the Secretariat, including its procedures, scope, and duties
- c) recommendation of disbandment of a Standards Committee
- d) addition of new Consensus Group members and designation of their interest categories
- e) issuance of a formal interpretation of a standard or information relating to a standard
- f) revisions to these Procedures

The following actions, by committee vote at a meeting, require approval by a majority of the members present:

- a) approval of minutes
- b) authorization of a letter ballot

6.5 Actions Requiring Approval by Two-Thirds of Those Voting. The following actions require a letter ballot or an equivalent, formal, recorded vote with approval by at least a majority of the membership and at least two-thirds of those voting, excluding abstentions. All members of the Consensus Group shall be given the opportunity to vote on the standards-related actions described below. Proxies will not be allowed. When votes for the items below are recorded at a Consensus Group meeting, those members who are absent shall be given opportunity to vote before or after the meeting, with all absentee votes being verified:

- a) approval of a new standard or reaffirmation of an existing one

- b) approval of revision or addendum to part or all of a standard
- c) withdrawal of American National Standards

6.6 Authorization of Letter Ballots. A letter ballot may be authorized by any of the following:

- a) majority vote of those present at a Consensus Group meeting
- b) the Chair
- c) the Secretariat
- d) petition of five or more members of the Consensus Group

6.7 Public Review¹.

6.7.1 Notification That Standard Will Be Developed. At the initiation of a project to develop an American National Standard, notification shall be made to ANSI using the Project Initiation Notification System Form (PINS). Any comments arising from the PINS shall be addressed in accordance with Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 of the *ANSI Essential Requirements*.

6.7.2 Public Review of Standard. Proposals for new American National Standards or reaffirmation, revision, or withdrawal of existing American National Standards shall be transmitted to ANSI for listing in *Standards Actions* for comment and shall be posted on the Association for Challenge Course website, and shall be published in other media and industry-related publications.

6.7.3 Processing Comments. Written comments shall be accepted for sixty days, unless the proposed standard is available electronically, then comments need only be accepted for forty-five days. For limited revisions (such as those that may be published in two pages or under in ANSI's *Standards Action*), the public review period shall be limited to thirty days. To be considered, negative comments must include a reason and, preferably, specific wording or actions which would resolve the objection. Within thirty days of the close of this period of public review, the Secretariat shall report the responses, including negative views, to the chairperson.

6.8 Disposition of Views and Objections. All comments with objections submitted during a public comment period or consensus body vote will be responded to in writing. Objections shall be referred to the Consensus Group Chair or to the Standards Committee responsible for the part of the standard in question to attempt resolution. The Consensus Group may request the Secretariat to obtain further information from the objector or attempt to correspond with the objector directly and reach resolution. Each unresolved objection, attempt at resolution,

¹ 6.7 Although a 60-day public comment period is not required in all instances, a number of provisions in the ANSI Essential Requirements, when read in combination, satisfy the WTO's 60-day rule. Before adopting a standard, ANSI-Accredited Standards Developers shall allow a period of at least 60 days in total for submission of comments on the draft standard if requested by an interested party within the territory of a Member of the WTO. Exceptions outlined in the rule are permitted due to issues of safety, health or environment. (See WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Annex 3 Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards (CGP) Substantive Provision L.

and substantive changes shall be reported/recirculated to the Consensus Group in order to afford members the opportunity to respond, reaffirm or change their votes. Substantive changes are subject to letter ballot and a new public review period. If changes are not made to the standard, the objectors shall be informed in writing of their right to appeal and of the appeals process contained in Section 11, *Appeals*.

6.9 Report of Final Result

The final result of the voting shall be reported, by interest categories, to the Consensus Group.

7 Submittal of Standard.

Upon completion of the procedures for voting, disposition of views and objections, and appeals, the proposed standard shall be submitted to ANSI by the Secretariat. The timeliness of this submittal shall be in accordance with the *ANSI Essential Requirements*. If the Secretariat does not submit to ANSI within a reasonable period of time, any member(s) of the committee may make the submittal.

7.1 Information Submitted. The Secretariat shall submit to ANSI all the necessary evidence of compliance with ANSI's criteria of approval of an American National Standard in accordance with Section 4.2.1.1 in the *ANSI Essential Requirements*.

7.2 Portions of a published document that were not approved through this consensus process shall not contain requirements necessary for conformance with the approved American National Standard (ANS) and (1) shall be clearly identified at the beginning and end of each such portion of the document, or (2) such information shall be overprinted on the cover page. These portions of the document shall be marked with the following, or similar, explanatory language:

The information contained in this [portion of a document] is not part of this American National Standard (ANS) and has not been processed in accordance with ANSI's requirements for an ANS. As such, this [portion of a document] may contain material that has not been subjected to public review or a consensus process. In addition, it does not contain requirements necessary for conformance to the standard.

8 Termination of Committee

Requests to terminate the Consensus Group shall be made in writing to the Secretariat and shall include at least the following:

- a) reasons why the committee should be terminated
- b) the name(s) of the organization(s) that will assume responsibility for maintenance of any existing American National Standard(s) that are the responsibility of the Consensus Group

9 Withdrawal of Standard

If the Secretariat approves the withdrawal of one or more American National Standards, it shall notify ANSI with the request to withdraw the standard. A vote of the Consensus Group is not required for this withdrawal.

10 Interpretation of Standards

Requests for formal interpretation of a standard shall be in writing and directed to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall acknowledge the request within thirty days of receipt and may issue a tentative interpretation or refer to a previous interpretation. No interpretation is binding unless it is approved by a majority of the Consensus Group in a meeting or by letter ballot in accordance with Section 6.1, *Vote*. The Chairperson of the Consensus Group shall appoint a task committee or an ad hoc committee to develop a proposed interpretation for vote by the Consensus Group. All responses shall be provided to the requestor in writing by the Secretariat.

11 Appeals

Persons who believe they have been or will be adversely affected by a standard within the committee's jurisdiction, or by the lack thereof, shall have the right to appeal substantive or procedural actions or inactions of the Consensus Group or the Secretariat. Appeals may also be filed for procedural complaints, including whether a technical issue was afforded due process. Appeals shall be submitted with a \$500.00 processing fee. A fee reduction or waiver may be requested.

11.1 Complaint. The complainant shall file a written complaint with the Secretariat within thirty days after the date of notification of action or at any time with respect to inaction. The complaint shall state the nature of the objection(s) including any adverse effects, the section(s) of these procedures or the standard that is at issue, actions or inactions that are at issue, and the specific action(s) that would satisfy the complainant's concerns. Previous efforts to resolve the objection(s) and the outcome of each shall be noted.

11.2 Response. Within thirty days after receipt of the complaint, the Chair or Secretariat representative shall respond in writing to the complainant, specifically addressing each allegation in the complaint to the extent possible. The Secretariat shall attempt to resolve the complaint informally.

11.3 Appeals Panel and Hearing. At the request of the appellant per Section 11.1, the Secretariat shall appoint an appeals panel to hold a hearing on a date agreeable to all participants, with at least 15 working days notice, but no more than 30 days notice. Appeals hearings may be held by conference call. The appeals panel shall consist of three individuals who have not been directly involved in the dispute and who will not be materially affected by any decision made in the dispute. If ACCT and the appellant cannot agree on the appeal panelists within 15 working days, ACCT may appoint the appeal panel.

11.4 Conduct of the Hearing. The complainant has the responsibility of demonstrating improper actions or inaction, the adverse effects therefrom, and the efficacy of the requested remedial action. The Secretariat has the responsibility to demonstrate that the Consensus

Group took all actions in question in compliance with these procedures and that the requested remedial action would be ineffective or detrimental.

11.5 Decision. The appeals panel shall render its decision in writing within 30 days, stating its findings of fact and conclusions, with reasons therefor, and citing the evidence. The Secretariat shall notify the complainant and the Consensus Group of the decision of the appeals panel, which shall be binding and final on all concerned.

11.6 Further Appeal. Further appeal may be made directly to ANSI, but only if the above process has been followed to its conclusion. If the complainant gives notice to the Secretariat that such a further appeal to ANSI is intended, all relevant materials, including the decision made by the appeals panel set forth above, shall be submitted to ANSI by the Secretariat.

12 Parliamentary Procedures

On questions of parliamentary procedure not covered in these procedures, *Robert's Rules of Order* (latest edition) may be used to expedite due process.

13 Metric Policy

All units found in the standards will be either English units plus standard international units (metric units) or standard international units alone.

14 Patent Policy

The ANSI Patent Policies, as specified in the *ANSI Essential Requirements*, Section 3.1, shall apply to all proposed American National Standards.

15 Record Retention Policy

Records shall be prepared and maintained to provide evidence of compliance with these procedures. Records concerning new, revised, or reaffirmed American National Standards shall be retained for one complete standards cycle.

Records concerning withdrawals of all American National Standards shall be retained for at least five years from the date of withdrawal.

All records, including financial, related to the development and maintenance of standards will reside at the offices of the Association for Challenge Course Technology.

16 Commercial terms and conditions Policy

The Secretariat shall comply with ANSI's Commercial terms and conditions Policy as set forth in the *ANSI Essential Requirements*.

17 Notification of Standards Development and Coordination Policy

ACCT shall abide by the ANSI policy on notification of standards development and coordination, as specified in the *ANSI Essential Requirements*, Section 2.5.

18 Antitrust Policy

American National Standards shall be developed in accordance with applicable antitrust and competition laws and meetings amongst competitors to develop American National Standards are to be conducted in accordance with these laws.

19 Periodic maintenance of American National Standards

Periodic maintenance is defined as the maintenance of a standard by review of the entire document and action to revise or reaffirm it on a schedule not to exceed five years from the date of its approval² as an American National Standard.

In the event that a PINS or BSR-8/108 has not been submitted for an American National Standard within five years after its approval, ACCT may request an extension of time to reaffirm or revise the standard, or shall withdraw the standard. The request for an extension of time shall be submitted to ANSI within thirty days following five years after the approval date of the American National Standard. Requests for extensions shall provide the program and schedule of work that will lead to revision, reaffirmation, or withdrawal. The extension may be granted by the ExSC or its designee.

No extension of time beyond ten years from the date of approval shall be granted for action on a standard. Except in the case of a national adoption, an ANS maintained under the periodic maintenance option shall not retain its status as a current American National Standard beyond ten years from the date of approval. Such approval automatically expires on the tenth anniversary date of approval as an American National Standard.

² “Approval” as an ANS refers to an action to approve a new document or reaffirm or revise an existing ANS.