



SFPE

Technical Document Development Procedures

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe the Standards Development Procedures that apply to the development of technical documents by the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE), including:

- Standards that are not accredited by ANSI
- Engineering Guides (note: engineering guides are not accredited by ANSI)

Standards that are intended to be accredited by ANSI shall be developed in accordance with SFPE ANSI Accredited Standards Development Procedures.

These procedures also govern the roles of:

- Subcommittee for Standards Oversight (SCSO)
- Technical committees that develop Standards
- Task groups that produce Engineering Guides

Amendments to these procedures shall be by approval of the SCSO and the SFPE Board of Directors (BOD).

These procedures have been developed to assist leadership, participants and Secretariat staff. SFPE develops fire protection engineering standards and guidelines that will provide fire protection engineers access to current information and practices in today's evolving world.

As the leaders in engineering a fire safe world, SFPE is the largest membership organization for fire protection engineers throughout the globe that crosses all fire safety industry sectors. SFPE is dedicated to defining, developing, and advancing the use of engineering best practices; expanding the scientific and technical knowledge base; and educating the global fire safety community, in order to reduce fire risk. Additionally, SFPE works with standards making bodies around the world to promote consensus-based standards that increase the effectiveness and productivity of fire safety engineering.

2. ORGANIZATION

In general, the technical document work of SFPE is accomplished in various Technical Committees ("Committees") and Task Groups.

2.1 SCSO

The SCSO is the governing body within SFPE to develop fire protection technical documents that will advance the global fire safety profession. The SCSO, in conjunction with the SFPE Secretariat, is responsible for establishing Committees and Task Groups as defined in the *SFPE Standing Rules* and these procedures. The SCSO has the overall responsibility for the administration of these procedures and the issuance of SFPE Standards and Engineering Guides. The SCSO shall be responsible for

- Approving the development of new Standards and Engineering Guides
- Appointing Committee and Task Group Chairs
- Appoint Committee members
- Acting on appeals of Committee/Task Group actions
- Releasing drafts of Standards and Engineering Guides for review and comment
- Issuing Standards and Engineering Guides

2.1.1 Appointment. The chair and members of the SCSO shall be appointed by the SFPE BOD. When vacancies arise, the SCSO shall identify the desired attributes of potential members and

recommend a minimum of two potential candidates per vacancy. The SCSO Secretariat shall submit the candidates to the SFPE BOD for consideration. Members of the SFPE BOD shall not be appointed to the SCSO.

2.1.2. Balance. The membership of the SCSO shall be sufficiently diverse to ensure reasonable balance without dominance by any single interest category. Participants from diverse interest categories shall be sought with the objective of achieving balance and shall be classified in accordance with section 5. For the purpose of SCSO appointments, the SCSO shall be balanced so that no more than 1/3 of the SCSO members are from a single interest category.

2.1.3 Terms of Membership. Members of the SCSO may serve a one three-year term and shall be eligible for two additional terms

2.1.4 Project Initiation Any person or organization may propose the development of a new Engineering Guide or Standard by sending a request to SFPE Headquarters, which will forward the proposal to the SCSO. The proposal should contain a proposed scope of the document and state why the document is needed.

The development of new Engineering Guides and Standards requires the approval of both the SCSO and the SFPE Board of Directors. The SCSO will assign the project to an existing Committee/Task Group or a new Committee/Task Group may be created for the purpose of developing the Engineering Guide or Standard. The SCSO will determine if the proposed document will be an ANSI-Accredited Standard, Non-ANSI Accredited Standard, or an Engineering Guide.

2.2 Committee Chair and Duties

The Chair of each Committee and Task Group shall be elected by the SCSO to serve a term that lasts for the development or revision of their Committee's document. The term of office shall begin at the close of the SCSO meeting at which they are elected. The Chair may be reappointed for additional terms as long as the Chair has served for less than 7 years at the time of reappointment. The Chair shall then serve until the completion of the revision cycle. Candidates should have previous Committee/Task Group and industry experience. Regardless of the above provisions, the Chair may be removed and replaced by the SCSO at any time.

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Committee/Task Group and shall perform such duties and exercise such other powers as prescribed from time-to-time by the Committee/Task Group. The Chair presiding over a Committee/Task Group shall have the responsibility to ensure that these Procedures are followed and that the meetings are conducted in a fair and efficient manner. The Chair should remain neutral in all discussions and should not influence decisions based on his/her leadership position.

When a Chair becomes vacant, a solicitation for applications for the position shall be posted in SFPE's newsletter and on SFPE's web page. Notice shall be provided a minimum of three months prior to appointment of a Chair. Chairs of Committees shall be appointed from among the applicants by the SCSO.

Nominations for Committee Chairs shall be provided to the SCSO by the SFPE Secretariat. Each nomination shall be accompanied by a letter from the management of the candidate's corporation, association or organization committing that entity to provide support for the candidate's performing the duties and responsibilities of the office.

A Committee Chair is approved by simple majority of the SCSO. For purposes of determining the simple majority, abstentions are not counted. If there are multiple candidates and no one candidate receives a simple majority on the first vote, a second vote is held between the top two receiving candidates.

2.3 Vice chair.

The Chair may appoint a Vice Chair from among the members of the Committee/Task Group who is authorized to serve as the Chair in the absence of the Chair.

2.4 Secretariat

The SFPE Technical Director shall act as Secretariat and be responsible to:

- Organize the Committees/Task Groups.
- Oversee compliance with these procedures, including commissioning legal review as necessary.
- Maintain rosters of all Committees and Task Groups.
- Ensure adherence to periodic maintenance of Standards/Engineering Guides to include taking action to revise, reaffirm or withdraw a document.
- Maintain all records pertaining to the Committees/Task Groups.
- Provide administrative support and secretarial services, as necessary, for the Committees/Task Group.
- Publish approved Standards/Engineering Guides and revisions.
- Perform other functions as required.

3. RECORDS

Material associated with the development of a Standard/Engineering Guide (including revisions, reaffirmations and withdrawals) shall be retained until the document is revised. Records regarding the withdrawal of all Standards/Engineering Guides shall be retained for at least five years from the date of withdrawal

4. MEMBERSHIP

Voting membership on Committees and Task Groups shall not be conditional upon SFPE membership, nor unreasonably restricted on the basis of technical qualifications or other such requirements. Participation is open to any directly and materially affected interested party.

The membership of the Committees shall be sufficiently diverse to ensure reasonable balance without dominance by any single interest category. Participants from diverse interest categories shall be sought with the objective of achieving balance and shall be classified in accordance with section 5. For the purpose of Committee appointments, the committee shall be balanced so that no more than 1/3 of the Committee members are from a single interest category.

Membership of a Task Group are not required to comply with the balance requirements outlined in section 5.

4.1 Request for Membership

Applications for Committee/Task Group membership shall identify the applicant's education and experience within the scope of the Committee/Task Group, an assurance of ability to actively participate in the activities of the Committee/Task Group, an identification of what organization the person would represent, an identification of what organization would fund participation in the

Committee/Task Group, an agreement to notify the Secretariat of any changes in employment or funding source, and whether the applicants organization would likely have an alternate. Membership application forms may be obtained from SFPE Headquarters or from the SFPE Website (www.sfpe.org).

An organization, company or government agency may change its identified representative (or alternate) by notifying the Secretariat in writing. No organization, company or government agency shall designate as a representative (or alternate) any individual who is already designated as the representative (or alternate) for another organization, company or government agency. When applying for membership on a Committee, applicants shall self-declare their own interest category as appropriate and in accordance with the SFPE established categories.

4.1.1 Committees. In recommending Committee membership requests, the SCSO shall consider the following:

- Need for active participation by each interest;
- Potential for dominance and imbalance by a single interest category, individual or organization;
- Extent of interest expressed and the willingness to participate actively; and
- The representative identified by the organization, company or government agency.

The SCSO may consider reasonable limits on Committee size.

Members and alternate members of Committees shall be appointed by the SCSO for one three-year term, and their term shall begin at the close of the meeting they were elected, subject to the provisions of section 5. Committee members may be reappointed for two additional terms. Preliminary assignment of interest represented shall be performed by the Secretariat and submitted to the SCSO for approval.

4.1.2 Task Groups. In recommending Task Group membership requests, the Task Group Chair shall consider the following:

- Need for active participation by each interest;
- Extent of interest expressed and the willingness to participate actively; and
- The representative identified by the organization, company or government agency.

The Chair may consider reasonable limits on Task Group size.

Members and alternate members of Task Groups shall be appointed by the Chair for one three-year term, and their term shall begin at the close of the meeting they were elected. Task Groups membership is not subject to the provisions of section 5. Task Group members may be reappointed for two additional terms.

4.2 Alternates

Each member may have an alternate, who shall be permitted to participate in the activities of the Committee/Task Group; however, votes or ballots cast by alternate members shall only be counted in the event that the alternate's corresponding member does not vote or return the ballot. Alternate members shall represent the same organization as the member to whom the alternate is to serve.

4.3 Membership Participation

Committee/Task Group members are expected to attend and participate in meetings. The Secretariat shall notify, in writing, Committee/Task Group voting members who fail to respond to two letter ballots. If a member so notified fails to respond to two letter ballots, that member shall be reclassified as an

observer. A member reclassified as an observer may obtain reinstatement as a voting member pursuant to responding to two consecutive letter ballots upon request. As observer members do not vote, such responses are noted for verification and record keeping purposes, and not included in the Committee/Task Group vote tally.

4.4 Membership Resignation

A Committee/Task Group voting member or observer may resign by written correspondence to the Secretariat.

5. INTEREST CATEGORIES

For purposes of developing a Standard, all members of Committees shall be classified as:

- Producer or manufacturer of a product that could be affected (design, manufacture or sale) by the standard
- Design engineer
- Enforcement official
- Research and testing, including public or private sector research organizations and academics who perform research that falls within the scope of the standard
- Facilities owner or manager
- Insurance interests
- Specialist with expert knowledge within the scope of the standard who is not described by one of the categories above

6. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

The SFPE Secretariat in conjunction with the SCSO shall prepare and maintain a membership roster documenting the classification of each Committee/Task Group member. This roster shall be posted on the SFPE website.

7. MEETINGS

Committee/Task Group meeting locations and dates shall be selected through the Chair and SFPE Secretariat. The purpose of these meetings is to conduct Committee business. Virtual meetings are encouraged whenever possible.

7.1 Frequency

The Committees/Task Groups will meet to develop Standards/Engineering Guides on an as-needed basis.

7.2 Notification

All meetings, including virtual meetings and conference calls, should be announced via e-mail and posted to the SFPE website no less than 15 calendar days prior to the meeting date. Special exceptions for extraordinary circumstances may be made on an as-needed basis. When an exception for extraordinary circumstances is necessary, the Chair in conjunction with the Secretariat will announce the meeting as soon as practicable. A draft agenda is typically distributed with the meeting notice.

7.3 Open Meetings

All Committee and Task Group meetings shall be open and attendance by any interested party is welcome, subject to approval by the Chair. Attendance may be limited based on practical considerations such as meeting room size.

7.4 Meeting Notes

Meeting notes shall include at a minimum:

- Date(s), type of meeting (i.e., virtual, conference call, face-to-face), leadership, person taking the notes;
- Attendance list;
- Approved agenda;
- Identification of matters discussed and their status;
- Identification of corrections/additions made to previous meeting record;
- Points noted/alternates discussed including opposing viewpoints;
- Agreements reached;
- Action items indicating responsible party and due date; and
- Copies of presentations made during the meeting or, a reference to where the documentation is available.

7.5 Quorum

Participation, by either physical presence or via teleconference or electronically, of a simple majority of the voting members of the Committee/Task Group shall constitute a quorum for conducting business at a meeting. If a quorum is not present, action items may be subject to ratification by the Committee/Task Group.

7.6 Parliamentary Procedures

For any procedural issues not covered under these procedures, “Robert’s Rules of Order” (latest edition) shall apply on questions of parliamentary procedure.

8. NOTIFICATION OF DOCUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND HARMONIZATION

Notification of Standards/Engineering Guide activity shall be announced in suitable media as appropriate to demonstrate provision of opportunity for participation by all directly and materially affected persons

Committees/Task Groups shall convene a stakeholder or joint requirements planning meeting as part of the Standard or Engineering Guide development process in order to maximize coordination and harmonization with other standards development organizations, particularly if any conflict has been identified. These meetings provide a venue for interested and affected parties to provide relevant and timely information. Input from stakeholder meetings may aid the Committees/Task Groups to better understand the business problem or rules of business relevant to their particular Committee/Task Group scope. These types of meetings enable business owners, decision makers and other interested or materially affected parties to participate initially as stakeholders and to the Committees’ efforts. The SFPE Secretariat shall announce stakeholder meetings in a timely manner sufficient to maximize public input and participation.

9. DOCUMENT PREPARATION

9.1 Non-ANSI Accredited Standards

9.1.1 Preparation of Initial Draft Standard. The Committee shall develop a draft of the proposed standard that is based on accepted science and fire protection engineering practice. When directed by the Chair, the Secretariat shall send a draft standard to all members and alternates of the Committee for letter ballot. The ballot shall be conducted in accordance with section 11.

Following approval of a draft standard by a Committee, the SCSO shall review the draft standard for consistency in meeting SFPE goals and adherence to SFPE policies and bylaws.

The draft standard shall be released for public review in accordance with section 9.1.7 by majority vote of SCSO.

Draft standards and standards undergoing revision shall be available for review and submission of proposed modifications for a minimum of 45 days.

9.1.2 Submitting Proposed Modifications. Proposed modifications shall be submitted in a manner prescribed by the Secretariat. Proposed modifications shall identify specific changes to the draft standard and a rationale for the proposed change. All proposed modifications submitted shall be catalogued by the Secretariat and distributed to all members and alternates of the Committee.

9.1.3 Actions on Proposed Modifications. The Committee shall meet on all proposed modifications received by the Secretariat. The voting procedure shall be in accordance with section 11.

The Committee may also generate proposed modifications at the meeting where the Committee acts on the proposed modifications submitted. Such proposed modifications must be developed by a motion, which must be approved by a simple majority of those present.

The Committee shall prepare a statement identifying the reasoning for any action other than “accept.” The Committee may reject any proposed modifications that do not identify specific changes or that do not contain sufficient rationale for the change. The Secretariat shall record all Committee actions, and the draft standard shall be revised in accordance with the actions taken on the proposed modifications. The Secretariat shall notify the submitter of each proposed modification of the action taken by the Committee.

After the Committee has acted on all of the proposed modifications submitted, the actions taken by the Committee on the proposed modifications shall be sent to all members and alternates of the Committee for letter ballot in accordance with Section 11. Additionally, a letter ballot shall be included on the full text of the standard, as modified by the actions on the proposed modifications.

Proposed modifications and the actions taken on proposed modifications shall be available for review and submission of comments for a minimum of 45 days. Comments shall be submitted in a manner prescribed by the Secretariat. Comments shall identify specific changes to the actions taken on one or more proposed modifications, and a rationale for the proposed change. All comments submitted shall be catalogued by the Secretariat and distributed to all members and alternates of the Committee. If no comments were received prior to the deadline for submitting comments, at the Chair’s discretion, a letter ballot on the document can be initiated in accordance with Section 11.

9.1.4 Review of Changes. Following action by Committee on proposed modifications, the proposed modifications and actions taken on the proposed modifications shall be made available for review and comment. Notification of the availability of the proposed modifications and the actions on the proposed modifications shall be made in accordance with 9.1.7.

The Committee shall meet to act on all comments on the proposed modifications received by the Secretariat prior to the deadline. The Committee shall take one of the actions identified in Section 11. These comments shall be limited to items related to coordination required by actions taken on proposed modifications or on comments. Such comments must be developed by a motion, which must be approved by a simple majority of those present.

The Committee shall prepare a statement that identifies the reasoning for any action other than “accept.” The Committee may reject any comments that do not identify specific changes or that do not

contain sufficient rationale for the change. The Secretariat shall record all Committee actions, and the draft standard shall be revised in accordance with the actions taken on the comments. The Secretariat shall notify the submitter of each comment of the action taken by the Committee. Comments that do not relate to a proposed modification shall be held for the next revision of the standard and treated as proposed modifications.

9.1.5 Balloting of Actions on Comments. After the Committee has acted on all of the comments submitted, the actions taken by the Committee on the comments shall be sent to all members and alternates of the Committee for letter ballot. The ballot shall be conducted in accordance with section 11.

9.1.6 Approval of Standard. Following approval of a standard by the Committee, the standard will be sent to the SCSO. The SCSO shall review the standard for consistency in meeting SFPE goals and adherence to policies and bylaws. Final release of the standard, pending resolution of any appeals will be by approval of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members of the SCSO in a letter ballot. The ballot shall be conducted in accordance with section 11.

9.1.7 Public Review and Comment. Proposals for new standards or reaffirmation, revision, or withdrawal of existing Standards shall be approved by the SCSO and shall be made in the SFPE newsletter and on SFPE's web page. Notification shall include the deadline for submitting proposed modifications. Draft standards shall be available from SFPE's web page or by contacting SFPE Headquarters. The SFPE Secretariat shall determine whether listing of proposed standards actions shall be concurrent with the final Committee letter ballot. Notification of Standards activity shall be announced in suitable media as appropriate to demonstrate an opportunity for participation by all directly and materially affected persons. All received comments shall be considered by the Committee and the commenter shall be notified, in writing, of the Committee decision, reasons therefore and response.

9.2 Engineering Guides

9.2.1 Preparation of Initial Draft Engineering Guide. The Task Group shall develop a draft of the proposed Engineering Guide that is based on accepted science and fire protection engineering practice. When directed by the Chair, the Secretariat shall send a draft Engineering Guide to all members and alternates of the Task Group for letter ballot. The ballot shall be conducted in accordance with section 11

Following approval of a draft guide by a Task Group, the SCSO shall review the draft guide for consistency in meeting SFPE goals and adherence to SFPE policies and bylaws.

The draft Engineering Guide shall be released for public review in accordance with section 9.2.5 by majority vote of SCSO.

Draft guides undergoing revision shall be available for review and submission of proposed modifications for a minimum of 45 days.

9.2.2 Submitting Proposed Modifications. Proposed modifications shall be submitted in a manner prescribed by the Secretariat. Proposed modifications shall identify specific changes to the draft standard and a rationale for the proposed change. All proposed modifications submitted shall be catalogued by the Secretariat and distributed to all members and alternates of the Task Group.

9.2.3 Actions on Proposed Modifications. The Task Group shall meet on all proposed modifications received by the Secretariat. The voting procedure shall be in accordance with section 11.

The Task Group may also generate proposed modifications at the meeting where the Committee acts on the proposed modifications submitted. Such proposed modifications must be developed by a motion, which must be approved by a simple majority of those present.

The Task Group shall prepare a statement that identifies the reasoning for any action other than “accept.” The Task Group may reject any proposed modifications that do not identify specific changes or that do not contain sufficient rationale for the change. The Secretariat shall record all Task Group actions, and the draft guide shall be revised in accordance with the actions taken on the proposed modifications. The Secretariat shall notify the submitter of each proposed modification of the action taken by the Task Group.

After the Task Group has acted on all of the proposed modifications submitted, the actions taken by the Task Group on the proposed modifications shall be sent to all members and alternates of the Task Group for letter ballot in accordance with Section 11.

9.2.4 Approval of Engineering Guide. Following approval of a Task Group, the Guide will be sent to the SCSO. The SCSO shall review the Engineering Guide for consistency in meeting SFPE goals and adherence to policies and bylaws. Final release of the Engineering Guide, pending resolution of any appeals will be by approval of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the members of the SCSO in a letter ballot. The ballot shall be conducted in accordance with section 11.

9.2.5 Public Review and Comment. Proposals for new Engineering Guides shall be approved by the SCSO and shall be announced in the SFPE newsletter and on SFPE’s web page. Notification shall include the deadline for submitting proposed modifications. Draft Engineering Guides shall be available from SFPE’s webpage or by contacting SFPE Headquarters. The SFPE Secretariat shall determine whether listing of proposed actions shall be concurrent with the final Task Group ballot. Notification of Engineering Guide development activity shall be announced in suitable media as appropriate to demonstrate an opportunity for participation by all directly and materially affected persons. All received comments shall be considered by the task group and the commenter shall be notified, in writing, of the Task Group decision, reasons therefore and response.

10. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

A substantive change in a Standard/Engineering Guide is one that directly and materially affects the use of the Standard/Engineering Guide. Examples of substantive changes are:

- “shall” to “should” or “should” to “shall;”
- the addition, deletion or revision of requirements, regardless of the number of changes; and
- the addition of mandatory compliance with referenced standards.

11. VOTING PROCEDURES FOR LETTER BALLOTS

All documentation associated with SFPE Standards/Engineering Guides will undergo the letter ballot process. Substantive changes to and interpretations of all Standards/Engineering Guides shall be approved by letter ballot of the Committee.

11.1 Voting

Each Committee/Task Group member shall vote either:

- Affirmative;
- Affirmative, with comment;

- 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);
- Abstain; or
- Abstention, with comment.

11.2 Voting Rights

A Committee/Task Group member shall ordinarily cast that member's vote. The member's alternate shall cast that member's vote only if the member fails to vote.

11.3 Proxies

Proxies are not permitted.

11.4 Voting Period

The voting period for letter ballots shall end 30 calendar days from the date of issue. 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 the representative and alternate representative of members whose votes have not been received within 10 calendar days before the ballot closes.

11.5 Approved Actions

Approvals of, ballots, substantive changes to, and interpretations of all Standards/Guides shall be considered approved where a majority of the Committee/Task Group membership returns ballots and at least two-thirds of those voting, including abstentions, approves the action.

11.6 Reporting Votes

The results of each vote on all Standards/Engineering Guides shall be reported as follows:

- Number of members.
- Number of members voting affirmatively.
- Number of members voting negatively with reasons.
- Number of members voting negatively without reasons.
- Number of members abstaining.
- Number of members not returning ballots.

11.7 Negative Votes

A negative ballot shall be required to be accompanied by a reason and, if possible, should include specific wording or actions that would resolve the objection. A negative ballot not supported by a reason is not required to be recirculated but is recorded as a negative without comment. The ballot shall be counted as returned for the purpose of establishing a quorum.

11.8 Considering of Views and Objections

Prompt consideration shall be given to the written views and objections of all participants. A concerted effort to resolve all comment(s) shall take place.

Each unresolved objection and attempt at resolution, and any substantive change made in a proposed Standard/Engineering Guide shall be reported to the consensus body in order to afford all members of the consensus body an opportunity to respond, reaffirm or change their vote.

In connection with an objection articulated during a public comment period, or submitted with a vote, an effort to resolve all expressed objections accompanied by comments related to the proposal under consideration shall be made, and each such objector shall be advised in writing (including electronic communications) of the disposition of the objection and the reasons therefor. If resolution is not

achieved, each such objector shall be informed in writing of their right to appeal and of the appeals process.

Submitters of unresolved negative votes and comments (from voting members and public review commenters) shall be notified in writing of their right to appeal and of the appeals process.

When the above process is completed, comments received subsequent to the closing of the public review may be considered, or they shall be considered at the next review. Timely comments that are not related to the proposal under consideration shall be documented and considered in the same manner as submittal of a new proposal. The submitter of the comments shall be so notified.

12. WITHDRAWAL CRITERIA

12.1 Withdrawal by SCSO

The SCSO may withdraw any Standard or Engineering Guide by a majority vote, at its own discretion, and without a vote of the relevant Committee.

12.2 Discontinuance of a Standards Project

The SCSO may decide to abandon the processing of a proposed new or revised technical document or portion thereof by a majority vote, at its own discretion, and without a vote of the relevant Committee.

13. INTERPRETATIONS

An interpretation is the answer to a question on the meaning of a Standard/Engineering Guide. Interpretation requests under the purview of SFPE must be submitted in writing to the Secretariat and shall be forwarded the SCSO and appropriate Committee/Task Group Chair. If an interpretation request is received for a Technical Document without a current responsible Committee/Task Group, the SCSO shall designate the appropriate Committee/Task Group to prepare the interpretation from among the active Committees/Task Groups or the SCSO shall appoint a new Committee/Task Group for the purpose of preparing the interpretation. Proposed interpretations may be prepared by a Committee/Task Group member with particular expertise on the subject in question. All proposed interpretations shall be prepared in writing and shall be submitted to the Secretariat for a letter ballot of the Committee/Task Group. Interpretations shall be approved in accordance with section 11. Notification of approved interpretations shall be sent in writing to the requester. Notifications shall also be given to other users of the Standards/Engineering Guides via the appropriate Committee/Task Group email list and posted on the SFPE web site.

14. METRIC POLICY

International System of Units (SI) are the preferred units of measurement in SFPE technical documents.

15. PATENT POLICY

There is no objection in principle to drafting an SFPE technical document in terms that include the use of an essential patent claim (one whose use would be required for compliance with that standard) if it is considered that technical reasons justify this approach. Participants in the technical document development process are encouraged to bring patents with claims believed to be essential to the attention of SFPE. If SFPE receives a notice that a proposed technical document or an approved technical document may require the use of such a patent claim, the procedures in this clause shall be followed.

15.1 Statement from Patent Holder

SFPE shall receive from the patent holder or a party authorized to make assurances on its behalf, in written or electronic form, either:

- a) assurance in the form of a general disclaimer to the effect that such party does not hold and does not currently intend holding any essential patent claim(s); or
- b) assurance that a license to such essential patent claim(s) will be made available to applicants desiring to utilize the license for the purpose of implementing the standard either:
 - i) under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination; or
 - ii) without compensation and under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination.

Such assurance shall indicate that the patent holder (or third party authorized to make assurances on its behalf) will include in any documents transferring ownership of patents subject to the assurance, provisions sufficient to ensure that the commitments in the assurance are binding on the transferee, and that the transferee will similarly include appropriate provisions in the event of future transfers with the goal of binding each successor-in-interest. The assurance shall also indicate that it is intended to be binding on successors-in-interest regardless of whether such provisions are included in the relevant transfer documents.

15.2 Record of Statement

A record of the patent holder's statement shall be retained in the Committee/task group files.

15.3 Notice

When the Secretariat receives from a patent holder the assurance set forth in 15.1 above, the technical document shall include a note substantially as follows:

NOTE – The user's attention is called to the possibility that compliance with this standard may require use of an invention covered by patent rights.

By publication of this technical document, no position is taken with respect to the validity of any such claim(s) or of any patent rights in connection therewith. If a patent holder has filed a statement of willingness to grant a license under these rights on reasonable and nondiscriminatory terms and conditions to applicants desiring to obtain such a license, then details may be obtained from the standards developer.

15.4 Responsibility for Identifying Patents

SFPE is not responsible for identifying patents for which a license may be required by an SFPE Technical Document or for conducting inquiries into the legal validity or scope of those patents that are brought to their attention.

16. COPYRIGHT

In order that SFPE may disseminate the work of its Committees/Task Groups, it is necessary that each contributor grant SFPE the rights necessary to adapt, copy and publicly distribute any contribution or submittal made to a Committee/Task Group.

All SFPE Standards and Engineering Guides are copyrighted by SFPE. Except as expressly permitted by SFPE, no Standard, Engineering Guide, or other SFPE deliverable, or any portion thereof, may be reproduced or distributed in any form, without the prior written permission of SFPE. The following copyright notice shall be included in all Standards/Engineering Guides.

“Copyright © SFPE [date of publication]. All Rights Reserved.”

17. COMMERCIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Provisions involving business relations between buyer and seller such as guarantees, warranties, and other commercial terms and conditions shall not be included in an SFPE Technical Document. The appearance that a standard endorses any particular products, services or companies must be avoided. Therefore, it generally is not acceptable to include manufacturer lists, service provider lists, or similar material in the text of a standard or in an annex (or the equivalent). Where a sole source exists for essential equipment, materials or services necessary to comply with or to determine compliance with the standard, it is permissible to supply the name and address of the source in a footnote or informative annex as long as the words “or the equivalent” are added to the reference. In connection with standards that relate to the determination of whether products or services conform to one or more standards, the process or criteria for determining conformity can be standardized as long as the description of the process or criteria is limited to technical and engineering concerns and does not include what would otherwise be a commercial term.

18. ANTITRUST POLICY

SFPE Technical Document shall be developed in accordance with applicable antitrust and competition laws and meetings amongst competitors to develop SFPE Technical Documents are to be conducted in accordance with these laws.

19. CORRESPONDENCE

19.1 Committee Correspondence

SFPE in consultation with the Committee/Task Group Chair will screen and distribute received correspondence from a Committee/Task Group member to the entire membership of the Committee. All official Committee/Task Group correspondence, including meeting notices, agendas, reports and letter ballots, shall be distributed by the SFPE Secretariat. Copies of all other correspondence between Committees/Task Groups or Committee/Task Group members, relating to SFPE standards activities, shall be forwarded to the SFPE Secretariat.

19.2 External Correspondence

All official Committee/Task Group correspondence to external parties must be approved by the Committee or its delegated representative and distributed by the SFPE Secretariat. Inquiries relating to the Committee/Task Groups and Standards/Engineering Guides shall be directed to the Secretariat.

20. APPEALS

20.1 Complaint

Persons who have been or may be affected by any Committee/Task Group action or inaction shall have the right to appeal such action or inaction. The appellant shall file a written complaint with the

Secretariat within 15 calendar days after the date of notification of any action, or at any time with respect to inaction. The complaint shall state the nature of the objection, the procedures or the sections of the Standards/Engineering Guides that are at issue, the action or inaction at issue, and the specific remedial action(s) that would satisfy the appellant's concerns. Previous efforts to resolve the objections and the outcome of each shall be noted.

20.2 Response

Within 30 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the Secretariat shall respond in writing to the appellant, specifically addressing each allegation in the complaint to the extent possible. Attempts shall be made to resolve, informally, the complaint of the appellant.

20.3 Appeals Panel and Hearing

If the Secretariat is unable to informally resolve the complaint, it shall appoint an appeals panel to hold a hearing on a date agreeable to all participants, and notice shall be within 15 calendar days. The appeals panel shall consist of three individuals selected by the Secretariat who have not been directly involved in the dispute and who will not be materially affected by any decision made in the dispute.

20.4 Conduct of Hearing

The appellant has the burden of demonstrating adverse effects, improper actions or inactions, and the efficacy of the requested remedial action. The Secretariat has the burden of demonstrating that the Committee/Task Group took all actions in question in compliance with these procedures.

20.5 Decision

The appeals panel shall render its decision in writing within 30 calendar days, stating findings of fact and conclusions, with reasons thereof, based on a preponderance of the evidence. The Secretariat shall notify the appellant and the Committee/Task Group in a written copy of the decision of the appeals panel, which shall be binding and final on all concerned.

21. REVISIONS TO PROCEDURES

These procedures are maintained by SFPE. Proposed revisions to this procedure may be submitted in writing by any Committee/Task Group member along with the supporting rationale for the proposed change. The Secretariat will present proposed revisions as appropriate to the SCSO for review and approval by the SFPE Board of Directors. SFPE may reject a proposed procedural revision. Questions or comments concerning these procedures are to be directed in writing to the SFPE Technical Director at SFPE, 9711 Washingtonian Blvd, Suite 380, Gaithersburg, MD 20878.