

ANSI's Role and Function

The American National Standards Institute is a nonprofit, privately funded membership organization that coordinates the development of U.S. voluntary national standards and is the U.S. member body to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission ([IEC](#)) via the United States National Committee ([USNC](#)).

ANSI does not itself develop American National Standards; rather it facilitates development by providing the structure within which standards can be developed and consensus can be achieved. ANSI approval of these standards is intended to verify that the principles of openness and due process have been followed in the approval procedure and that a consensus of those directly and materially affected by the standards has been achieved. The voluntary standards system in the United States consists of a large number of standards developers that write and maintain one or more national standards. The Institute ensures that its guiding principles -- consensus, due process and openness -- are followed by these standards developers through the process of accreditation.

One of the methods of accreditation is the Canvass method. Using this method, the accredited sponsor conducts a canvass or mail poll of persons known to be directly or materially affected by the subject covered by the scope of the standard, in order to obtain evidence of consensus for approval of the standard as an American National Standard.

Canvass Process

In order to help you understand the ANSI canvass process a little better, we have prepared description of what is involved in canvassing a potential ANSI Standard.

- A precanvass list identifying those that are potentially interested in and affected by the proposed standard is compiled by a SPRI Task Force. Areas of interest are defined to accommodate the document being canvassed.
- A precanvass survey is done soliciting participation.
- A press release is issued announcing the intent to canvass inviting participation from those not originally identified by the SPRI Task Force.
- ANSI announces canvass in [Standards Action](#).
- Canvass begins:
 - Negative ballots are reviewed by Task Force members.
 - Volunteer leader/Task Force responds in writing to all negatives.
 - Substantial changes to the proposed standard require recirculation to the complete canvass list.
 - [Canvass participants must be advised of their right to appeal](#).
 - If any negatives cannot be resolved, the document, the negative ballot and all correspondence must be circulated to the complete canvass list for reconsideration. Any participant can change their vote.
- Once balloting has closed, the document and necessary paperwork are submitted to ANSI with the ballot results.