

10 INTERPRETATIONS OF STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

These procedures are used if an interpretation is requested on a standard or guideline.

10.1 Applicable Requests.

These procedures apply to responses to requests received for interpretation of requirements included in a currently published ASHRAE Standard or Guideline.

10.2 Requests Not Covered.

These procedures do not apply to:

- a) postulated requirements or proposed changes not included in the standard or guideline,
- b) requests for justification or derivation of requirements where no justification is included in the standard,
- c) settling of disputes over differing interpretations of requirements that are unambiguously presented in the standard or guideline as evidenced by lack of credible examples of possible multiple interpretations,
- d) requests for checking of plans or specifications, or
- e) errata.

10.2.1 Changes to Standard or Guideline.

An interpretation shall not be used to change the content of a standard or guideline. If a PC has recommended publication public review of an addendum or revision that bears on the request for interpretation, the PC may reference the proposed change and its status in the comment section of the interpretation.

10.2.2 Other Options.

Letters that are not requests for interpretation but rather proposals for changes to published standards or guidelines should be submitted to the MOS to be referred to the cognizant PC if one exists. If no PC exists or has been authorized, the MOS will refer the proposal to PPIS.

10.2.3 Definitions

- a) Interpretation-official: a written explanation of the meaning of a specific provision of a standard or guideline, as determined by an existing cognizant PC or an Interpretation Committee (IC), in response to a written request.
- b) Interpretation-unofficial (personal): a written explanation of the meaning of a specific provision of a standard or guideline, as determined by the Technology Department Staff, in response to a written request.

10.2.4 Contact for Requests

Requests for either official or unofficial interpretations should be submitted to the MOS.

10.2.5 Wording of Requests for Interpretation

As a courtesy, the MOS should give the requester opportunity to review and concur in a formatted request incorporating the essence of the request's background information and questions. Requester concurrence in the edited request is desired but not required. Typical reasons for Standards Staff editing are to:

- a) assist the requester to correct deficiencies in the request,
- b) provide brevity,
- c) assure clarity,
- d) conform to accepted style,
- e) broaden the applicability of the response,
- f) increase usefulness of the response to other users of the standard, or
- g) modify the questions in response to objections received from others after publication of the interpretation.

10.3 Types of Requests

10.3.1 Receipt of Requests.

After a request is received, the MOS shall notify the requester of the interpretation procedures, the typical response times, and that ASHRAE will not normally respond to a follow up request for official interpretation to confirm a previous unofficial interpretation. The requester will then be given opportunity to request either an unofficial or official interpretation.

10.3.2 Request for Unofficial Interpretation.

Interpretation requests for a standard must be submitted to the MOS in writing. The Assistant Manager of Research & Technical Services or the Chair of the current or past cognizant PC may respond in writing to written requests for unofficial personal interpretations. The following disclaimer shall be included with all responses to unofficial (personal) interpretations:

“An unofficial or personal interpretation is a written explanation of the meaning of a specific provision of a standard or guideline in response to a written request. While every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy and reliability, it is advisory and provided for informational purposes only, and in many cases represents only one person’s view. It is not intended and should not be relied on as an official statement of ASHRAE.”

10.3.3 Request for Official Interpretation.

Requests for official interpretation that meet the requirements of Section 10.2.5 will be referred by the MOS to a cognizant PC or Interpretations Committee (IC) if one exists. Cognizant SSPCs, if they exist, and SPCs that have not yet been disbanded will be asked to respond to requests for official interpretations in writing. If no PC exists, PPIS will form an Interpretations Committee (IC) to respond. An issuance or revision of an official interpretation requires affirmative votes for the majority of the memberships of each approving and of at least two-thirds of those voting, excluding abstentions.

10.3.4 Establishment of Interpretations Committee.

After a new or revised standard or guideline has been issued and the PC discharged, an IC, if not already in existence, shall be formed by PPIS if there is an anticipated need or if a request for official interpretation is received.

10.3.5 Joint Standards or Guidelines.

For a jointly sponsored standard or guideline, where ASHRAE is the lead organization, establishment of an IC shall follow the procedures in Section 10, except that the membership of the IC shall include representatives of the other sponsoring organization(s). The proportion of members from each sponsor shall be similar to the proportion of the members of the original PC. The MOS shall notify the other sponsors when a request for official interpretation has been received at the same time the IC is notified.

10.3.6 Organization.

The Interpretations Committee (IC) shall consist of:

- a) chair
- b) vice-chair, if size or activity warrant, and
- c) members

10.3.7 Chair.

The IC Chair shall be appointed by the Chair of PPIS. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be ASHRAE members.

10.3.8 Selection of IC Members.

The IC Chair shall select other committee members. The IC Chair shall submit his proposed roster of IC members to the MOS who will send the roster to PPIS for approval. A member of PPIS will be appointed IC liaison.

10.3.9 Membership.

The minimum number of IC members shall be three. Members shall meet the qualifications for PC members (See PC MOP 4.8). The MOS shall notify IC members of their appointments and supply each with a copy of this Appendix and the standard or guideline under the jurisdiction of the IC.

10.3.10 Discharge of Interpretations Committee.

Discharge of the IC shall be accomplished by a letter of notice issued by the MOS. PPIS may also discharge the IC at any time for due cause subject to the approval of the Chair of the StdC.