What’s involved?
Standards technical committees
Standards solutions

Standards solutions are used by a diverse range of organisations to enhance their products and services, improve safety and quality, meet industry best practice, and support trade into existing and new markets. Developed by those directly affected by them, Standards are drafted by a representative technical committee that includes designers, manufacturers, safety regulators, and consumers. The independent, consensus-driven development process, of which public comment is a vital part, is provided for by the Standards Act 1988.
Why do technical committees matter?

Standards technical committees are central to the Standards development process. They work on a transparent and consensus-based approach that leads to the development of Standards solutions that are robust and workable.

Balanced technical committees comprise experts acting as volunteers, gifting to the committee their knowledge and skills through a process that enables experts to challenge, test, and moderate to achieve the best outcome.

Technical committee members work together to develop content for the Standards solution, with input from other interested parties during the public consultation period. This inclusive process generates wide support and recognition for the final Standards solution and ensures it is fit for purpose.

“Being involved with a technical committee provides a unique opportunity to work with your peers to create something that benefits both your sector and New Zealand as a whole. Consensus and transparency are two of the hallmarks of the development process and ensure that Standards are relevant and practical.”

Derek Johns, Chair and member of several international and Australia/New Zealand Standards technical committees
The means of achieving Standards is through a process of technical committees. It has been said that a camel is a horse designed by a technical committee; I would have you think for a moment about camels. They are sturdy, quite long-lived, are not high-maintenance, plod on until they reach their destination, foster trade, survive in the most hostile environments, and save lives.

Much like Standards, really.

Pat Cunniffe, member of many technical committees and consumer advocate
How are technical committee members selected?

Standards New Zealand invites organisations that represent the views of a large, usually national, group with a common interest in the area being addressed by the Standards solution to nominate a representative for the technical committee. Standards New Zealand appoints members from the nominations received – working to ensure the technical committee is balanced and has a good mixture of expert knowledge and experience.

Nominating organisations

Nominating organisations may be regulators, professional bodies, research agencies, manufacturers, end users, or others with an interest in the subject.

Examples of nominating organisations include the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand, Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, the Timber Industry Federation, the Fire Protection Association of New Zealand, and BRANZ. Government agencies that act as nominating organisations include the Ministry of Health; the Department of Internal Affairs; and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
What are the benefits of being involved in the development process?

There are a number of benefits to being involved with developing Standards solutions including the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of industry and the public good.

For nominating organisations

Nominating organisations have the opportunity to communicate the views of their organisation to their nominated technical committee member, giving them a voice in the development process.

Other benefits include:

- recognition as a leader within the sector
- professional development opportunities within the organisation and sector
- ability to make input to and build awareness of Standards solutions that affect the organisation and sector.

The Standards development process
For technical committee members

By being involved in the development of a Standards solution, technical committee members are able to directly contribute to and shape the direction of their sector. The process can also support a technical committee member’s professional development by:

- enhancing their professional experience
- building networks and learning from other experts in their field
- contributing to, and learning from, the latest international knowledge.

Technical committee member satisfaction

In an effort to continually improve, Standards New Zealand conducts an annual performance survey that includes asking technical committee members about their committee experience. There is little deviation in the results each year which are high.
At Responsible Care New Zealand we’re acutely aware that our members work in a hazardous industry where there is no room for ‘good enough’. Standards development plays an important role in continuous improvement within the sector, and ensures that the industry has the tools available to meet its legal and moral obligations.

Barry Dyer, Responsible Care New Zealand, a nominating organisation for a number of technical committees
What are the roles and responsibilities?

Our responsibilities to technical committees

Standards New Zealand has a number of responsibilities through the Standards development process.

• To the technical committee members and nominating organisations who are involved with the development of the Standards solution
• To our clients who sponsor the Standards solution, ensuring that regulators (where applicable) are involved in the development process
• To our customers who may use the Standards solution
• To the consumers who may use the products or services that are affected by the Standards solution

These responsibilities include:

• ensuring the objectives and scope of the project are clearly understood and agreed by all involved in the project
• developing and implementing a plan to achieve the project objectives within an agreed time frame and budget
• facilitating the Standards development process
• being in regular contact with the client that has sponsored the Standards solution and with technical committee members
• ensuring the technical committee stays focused on quality of content to achieve the project objective
• managing risks and issues that arise during the project
• following through on the publication to support the required education in conjunction with the client, and promotion of the Standards solution.
Committee Chair’s responsibilities

Standards New Zealand may act as an independent Chair or appoint a Chair from the technical committee. The Chair must act as an impartial facilitator. The Chair will ensure all technical committee members have the opportunity to have their say, and that committee consensus is reached through reasonable compromise. The Chair is responsible for:

- helping to achieve consensus on content where there are differing views and ensuring all views are heard
- facilitating the resolution of technical issues
- assisting with answering enquiries about the Standard post-publication.

(The Standards technical committee ceases to operate once a Standard is published.)

“There is a huge sense of satisfaction to be derived from participating in the development of Standards. Not only do you make a valuable contribution to your sector and to New Zealand as a whole, you build on your professional experience, as well as form networks and learn from the expert knowledge of others in your field.”

Don Bunting, Masterspec and technical committee member
Standards technical committee member responsibilities

Standards technical committee members should be experts within their field and also be able to be team players. The Standards development process relies on reaching consensus, which involves considering other views and being able to work cooperatively.

To achieve the best possible outcome, technical committee members are expected to attend all meetings. There are typically up to four 1-day meetings to develop a draft Standard for public consultation, and one 2-day meeting to review the comments received during the public consultation period and update the draft document where appropriate.

Technical committee members are encouraged to:

- prepare thoroughly before technical committee meetings
- consult with nominating organisations and other interest groups they may represent
- contribute to technical committee work between technical committee meetings – this may include researching, drafting, or reviewing sections of the Standards solution.

Nominating organisation responsibilities

Organisations should nominate experts within their field who are able to contribute strongly as a team member.

Nominating organisations should regularly communicate with their nominated technical committee member about the views of their organisation so they can be effectively represented throughout the development of the Standards solution.

Standards New Zealand is not funded to reimburse committee members for the costs of travel, accommodation, or meeting attendance. These costs will need to be met by nominating organisations or technical committee members.