



Evening Session - 2016

ES1 The American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) Standards Development Process

Jennifer F. Limoges, MS, New York State Police, Forensic Investigation Center, 1220 Washington Avenue, Bldg 30, Albany, NY 12226-3000; Lucy A. Davis, BHS, LDH Consultants, 2944 N Mayo Trail, Pikeville, KY 41501; Mary C. McKiel, PhD*, The McKiel Group, LLC, 684 Southern Hills Drive, Arnold, MD 21012; Kenneth W. Aschheim, DDS, 44 E 67th Street, New York, NY 10065; Brad J. Wing, MS*, 4401 Chesapeake Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016-4423; and Teresa L. Ambrosius*, 410 North 21st Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904*

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the standards development process and how the AAFS Standards Development Organization (SDO) process will work.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating attendees on how the AAFS will be involved in generating American National Standards for the forensic sciences.

The development of standards and guidelines for forensic science has become a priority within the criminal justice community. The National Commission of Forensic Sciences (NCFS) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) are actively pursuing this goal. Many AAFS members are leaders in the development of these documents. As one of the largest and most diverse forensic science organizations in the world, it is appropriate that AAFS share its members' expertise to ensure that standards are set by the forensic science community itself. AAFS has completed its application to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to become an accredited SDO. A wholly owned subsidiary corporation entitled the AAFS Standards Board, LLC has been developed to provide the mechanics of the Academy's SDO activities. As an accredited SDO, AAFS will be able to coordinate the approval of proposed standards to become American National Standards (ANS).

Numerous industries, government agencies, and consumers outside of forensic science rely on voluntary consensus standards to direct them in their processes. The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) of 1995 and the Office of Management and Budget Circular A119 requires federal agencies to adopt private sector standards, particularly those developed by SDOs, wherever possible in lieu of creating proprietary, non-consensus standards. While there are many accredited SDOs supplying forensic-specific standards, the overall process of standard development is not always clearly understood. All ANSI-accredited SDOs must follow the "ANSI Essential Requirements: Due Process Requirement for American National Standards." These requirements focus on ensuring the standards development follow a procedure that is open to all interested parties, is balanced to allow parties equal participation, no individual or group can dominate the procedure, and that due process including mandatory public review and comments is allowed. All comments received concerning a proposed standard must be addressed prior to final vote of the standard. The Essential Requirements also demand that final consensus must be achieved before a standard is allowed to go forth.

The AAFS SDO process will be run by the Academy Standards Board (ASB). The ASB will conduct their work in a manner that is open to public scrutiny and provide every stakeholder an opportunity to be heard, without dominance by any party, in compliance with national and international standard development procedures. The ASB will appoint a Consensus Body technical committee for each proposed standard. The Consensus Bodies will be comprised of volunteers from relevant and interested parties both within the Academy and the forensic science community as a whole. These Consensus Bodies will be responsible for creating and approving consensus standards to be submitted to ANSI via the ASB for approval as an American National Standard. The ASB will conduct this standards development in accordance with the requirements of ANSI's Essential Requirements for balance, lack of dominance, due process, and consensus. The Consensus Bodies will consider all public comments, views and objections to ballots, and resolve all negative comments prior to approving the proposed standard. The ASB process will be open and balanced and will encourage public comment.

This presentation will provide an overview of how the standards development process works and detail the specifics of the Academy Standard Board's process including a specific outline of each step in the ASB standard development procedures. Issues such as how balance is achieved within a Consensus Body, how interested parties are defined, and resolution of public comments will be discussed. Information will also be provided on how AAFS members and the forensic science community can participate in the ASB process and the Consensus Bodies. Time for questions and discussion will allow participants to fully understand the standard development process and the Academy's commitment to ensuring the quality of the standards development.

Standards Development, SDO, ANSI

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