



### W12 Voluntary Consensus Standards—Where They Come From and What They Mean for You

Lucy A. Davis, BHS\*, LDH Consultants, LLC, Pikeville, KY 41501; Sharon K. Stanford, BA\*, American Dental Association, Homewood, IL 60430; Teresa Ambrosius, BA\*, AAFS, Colorado Springs, CO 80904; Daniel G. Smith, MA\*, ASTM International, Hatboro, PA 19040; Michael Wixted, MA\*, National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MD 02169; Jennifer F. Limoges, MS\*, New York State Police, Albany, NY 12226-3000; Kenneth W. Aschheim, DDS\*, New York, NY 10065; Kris C. Cano, MA\*, City of Scottsdale Police Department, Scottsdale, AZ 85257; Christine Funk, JD\*, Saint Paul, MN 55102; Vincent J. Desiderio, Jr., MS\*, United States Postal Inspection Service, Washington, DC 20260

**Learning Overview:** The goals of this presentation are to educate attendees on the process and products of different forensic Standards Developing Organizations (SDO) and provide practical examples from experts on the application of consensus standards to different forensic disciplines.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing education regarding the development of consensus-based standards and the emerging role those standards may have as laboratories begin to implement them.

The 2009 National Academy of Sciences Report on the status of forensics in the United States highlighted private sector standards as fundamental keys to a more effective forensic foundation across the country.<sup>1</sup> The Report emphasized the need for standards to shore up gaps in communications among field practitioners, testing laboratories, crime investigators, and the courts. The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) was formed to facilitate the development of technically sound forensic science standards and promote the adoption of those standards by the forensic science community. Many of the documents developed by OSAC committees are submitted to an SDO to undergo their accredited procedures for public comment and due process.

Voluntary Consensus Standards can seem like scary creatures. Rumors are flying regarding how they are developed in back alleys and that forensic scientists will be shackled with them and their evil ways for eternity. This workshop is designed to dispel those myths and rumors and promote peace and understanding between the forensic and standards worlds. Four SDOs that have published standards related to the forensic science will present information concerning standards and their organizations' processes. The American Dental Association (ADA) will provide an overall view of the nature of standards as a language that ensures product consistency and compatibility, allows for equitable competition, technology dissemination, and public welfare across multiple disciplines internationally, including how to include the perspectives and needs of all stakeholders. The AAFS Academy Standards Board (ASB) will discuss their standards development process and provide an overview of their operations and committee structure and will share examples of how of their standards and best practices are used in the forensic community. The American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International will provide an overview of their Committee E30, their standards development process, and how resulting standards are used. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) will also present their processes and standards. After a question-and-answer period with the SDO representatives, forensic science practitioners will discuss their experience with standards within their disciplines. AAFS members who deal with toxicology, odontology, DNA, and trace material will provide practical examples of how standards are, or may be, applied to their professional practices in forensics. Also, a lawyer will present her prospective of standards and the application of them from the jurisprudence perspective. Another discussion period will be held with this panel.

The forensic science community should understand what consensus-based standards are available, how to apply them to real-time forensic practices, and adapt their methods, technology, and terminology to adopt the standards as they become available. The standards being developed will influence the future perception of forensic science applications and may become the basis for legal acceptance, accreditation, and certification programs. By individual forensic scientists understanding the standards development process and finding ways they can become actively involved in that process, they may better support and facilitate the adoption of the standards in their everyday work procedures.

Presentations and remarks of the panelists will enable attendees to understand the changing forensic landscape marked by the introduction and application of consensus-based forensic standards and development process. These presentations will present current and potential activities related to the development and application of consensus standards for forensic uses.

#### Reference(s):

- <sup>1.</sup> National Research Council. 2009. *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/12589>.

**Standards, Standard Developing Organizations, OSAC**