

Improvements to the NCWM Standards Development Process

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Three areas for improvement are offered for consideration.

1. **Issue development:** Many issues are not adequately developed between meetings. Most issues receive development only at regional and NCWM meetings.
 - a. Frequently, complex issues are not resolved in a timely manner, because the issues are not adequately researched, developed and analyzed between meetings.
 - b. Regulatory people are often too busy with their regular work to study and develop issues in advance of meetings.
 - c. There is not enough time at meetings for committee members to do in depth analyses and the people who are experts on the issues are not in attendance at each and every meeting.
 - d. It seems as though regional or national committees seldom consider written comments. When issues extend over multiple years, previous written and oral comments are rarely considered, because they are not incorporated into reports. Each year the discussion basically starts over with only the information provided by the submitter of each item.
 - e. If someone submits written comments, but doesn't attend a meeting, then the significance of the written comments is greatly diminished. In a few rare instances, references to oral comments are incorporated into reports.
 - f. Oral comments and some individuals have excessive influence at regional and national meetings and people are often persuaded by emotional arguments rather than technical arguments.
 - g. There isn't enough time at the meetings for committee members to obtain input, discuss and analyze the input, summarize the major technical and regulatory issues, and then document the basis for their decisions in their committee reports.

2. **Committee Reports:** The committee reports should be concise summaries of the issues, the assessment of the options considered, and the rationale and justification of the committees for their decisions and recommendations. These reports are the historical documentation of the standards development process.
 - a. National committee reports appear to be assembled with "add on" regional positions; they are not written to document, in concise statements, the issues and analyses.
 - b. Due to time constraints, the regional committees are focused on developing superficial text to be incorporated into their reports on each item, rather than to write comprehensive summaries of their discussions and decision rationale.
 - c. There is no information in committee reports to inform others of how opposing views or negative comments were addressed and resolved.

- 3. Voting Process:** The NCWM voting is limited to the people who attend the Annual Meeting. Other methods of voting should be considered to expand the number of people who can vote on the issues.
- a. There has been a lack of time management on the discussion of some issues. Some of the time management problem is due to the poor development and documentation of some issues.
 - b. People must be present at the meeting to protect their interests, because the actions taken at the meetings may be surprising.
 - c. Recommendations may be changed and voted upon at the Annual Meeting without time for review by those not attending the meeting.
 - d. Issues may be changed significantly at the Annual Meeting, but the state representative may not have the time or the opportunity to consult with experts on his or her staff before the vote is taken.
 - e. Emotional arguments, rather than technical, substantive comments, may sway people at the last minute before a vote.
 - f. Last minute arguments on the floor of the conference by one or two influential people should not decide issues.