

AHJ's Wanted—

UL's Standards development process allows greater input from code officials

by Deborah R. Prince

Standards Technical Panels (STPs) are the consensus bodies for ANSI/UL Standards and advisory bodies for UL Standards. The STP process provides input from all interested parties—regulatory officials, design professionals, consumer groups, producers, government agencies, and others—at the earliest stage of standards development. Additional participation by AHJs will further improve what UL believes is a value-added system of standards development.

Many STPs currently include AHJs who provide a valuable resource at the table by sharing their expertise based on field experience. UL would like to have more AHJs participate on STPs. Having AHJs on the STPs helps promote public safety requirements and produces UL Standards that are compatible with the installation codes. AHJs bring a very important perspective to the STP and they have been successful in maintaining a balance between the needs of the producers and the needs of the regulatory community.

“Membership on a STP provides the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) with a unique opportunity to participate and contribute to the standards development process,” says Lanny McMahon, city of Phoenix. “Being able to provide an AHJ’s perspective is a critical aspect in the development of product safety standards. The AHJs’ participation can help to ensure that installation codes and product standards work in harmony with one another. Harmonizing codes and standards equates to the essential goal of affording the public protection from fire and shock hazards.”

How does the STP process work? The STP process includes the following features:

- **Standards Technical Panels (STPs)** – Comprised of a balanced group that includes AHJs, design professionals, consumers, producers, government agencies, (such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission), and other knowledgeable, interested parties. Standards Technical Panels (STPs) serve as the standards development forum, or “consensus” bodies, for new and revised UL Standards.

- **Early participation** – All interested parties have the opportunity to provide input from the beginning of the standards development process.

- **Open meetings** – STP meetings are open to all interested parties.

- **Continuous maintenance** – For UL Standards that have been approved as American National Standards by ANSI, the STP process provides for concurrent development of requirements and ANSI recognition using *continuous maintenance*. The continuous maintenance process permits UL to submit revisions of ANSI-approved standards through an accredited consensus process as the revisions are developed. This means that ANSI/UL Standards will be constantly updated to reflect new technologies and field experience.

UL has established more than 270 STPs, and we continue to recruit AHJs and general interest participants for many of those STPs. UL may provide funding for regulatory participants to attend an STP meeting upon request.

We are looking forward to having more AHJs apply for membership on STPs so they can share their expertise in the development of product safety requirements, as well as the continued participation of those already on STPs. Participation on a STP does not necessarily require a tremendous investment in time or expense, and will help ensure that the regulatory officials’ concerns are adequately represented in the development of UL Standards. We would encourage all interested AHJs and code users to contact UL to find out more about serving on these STPs.

For more information on UL’s standards development process, or on serving on a Standards Technical Panel, go to <http://ulstandardinonet.ul.com/stp/index/html>. For a list of STPs presently seeking new members, go to http://ulstandardinonet.ul.com/stp/call_4_members.html and search for STP’s seeking user category members or contact Deborah Prince by phone at (919) 549-1460, by fax at (919) 547-6178 or by e-mail at Deborah.R.Prince@us.ul.com. ✎