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2019

Manual for the Standards Development Program

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Manual for Standards Development Program

Abstract: This manual describes the process of developing standards as part of the APTA Standards Development Program for all public transportation modes and related issues.

Keywords: APTA, education/training, guidelines, instructions, policies, procedures, *Recommended Practices*, standards, standards development activities, Standards Development Oversight Council, Standards Policy & Planning Committee, technical specification, white paper, working group

Scope and purpose: This manual defines the standardized processes and procedures for all standard development efforts under the APTA Standards Development Program. This document contains the operating procedures for approving a new document (standard, *Recommended Practice*, guideline, white paper, technical specification and/or educational training document), as well as procedures for revising, reaffirming and withdrawing documents. It defines the process for voting by a consensus body and conducting public and industry review of comments. It also details the responsibilities of APTA's Standards Policy & Planning Committee (SPPC) to approve or withdraw documents. As appropriate, samples of relevant forms, templates and illustrations have been provided to further define these operating procedures.

*Compiled under the direction of the Standards Development Oversight Council (SDOC)
of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA)*

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Introduction

This Manual for the Standards Development Program (hereafter referred to as “the manual”) is developed, approved and maintained by the Standards Development Oversight Council (SDOC) of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). The APTA Standards Development Program uses the resources of the North American Transportation Services Association (NATSA) to publish the standards. NATSA is a wholly owned subsidiary of APTA through which APTA executes a variety of service-related efforts, including the standards program, peer reviews and safety audits. “NATSA” and “APTA” are used interchangeably for the purposes of this document.

When the APTA Standards Development Program was first started in the late 1990s, each program—including bus transit, rail transit, safety and security, and procurement—had its own manual for developing and processing standards. This resulted in differing processes, bylaws and standards formats for each of these programs.

The intent of this document is to standardize processes for all standards development programs into a single manual. Some of the changes relate to the organizational structure of the standards program, the new standards format, defining the standards development process, etc.

APTA standards are developed by its working groups using a consensus-based process. With the exception of APTA staff advisers, members of these working groups are volunteers. They represent a consensus of broad expertise, including public transportation systems, builders, suppliers, labor and government representatives, and others within the industry.

APTA’s member organizations and the SDOC do not assume any duties or responsibilities for users of this manual. By publishing this manual, APTA does not insure anyone using the information contained in the manual against any liability resulting from that use.

For purposes of discussion in this manual, the terminology “standard” shall be regarded as being inclusive of six different document types, as noted in Section 4.1.

Requests for official interpretations, comments or suggestions should be addressed to:

American Public Transportation Association
Standards Development Program
1300 I Street, NW, Suite 1200 East
Washington, DC 20005
Email: standards@apta.com

1. About NATSA

NATSA is a nonprofit international association of over 1,500 public and private sector member organizations, including public transit systems and commuter operators; planning, design, construction and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations; and state departments of transportation. NATSA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services and products. Over 90 percent of people using public transportation in the United States and Canada are served by NATSA members.

1.1 Mission statement

To bring together the world's leading experts in public transportation to organize, develop, implement and maintain standards that lead to safer and more efficient operations, provide better methods of system procurement, lower maintenance costs, and encourage design and operation innovation.

NATSA's mission is to:

- Serve and represent its members in making public transportation an effective path to economic opportunity, personal mobility and improving quality of life through partnerships, communication, technology and advocacy.
- Seek synergy and reduce redundancy among NATSA's transit standards programs through the creation of a single unified organization representing all operating modes and technologies whose primary purpose is to oversee and coordinate the development and promotion of standards in the public transportation industry.
- Make NATSA's transit standards development programs a more attractive and effective investment for federal agencies, public transportation organizations and their suppliers.
- Communicate the benefits of standards to the public transportation industry. Increase the visibility and awareness of NATSA's transit standards programs to gain full support, acceptance and use throughout the public transportation industry.
- Serve as the liaison to organizations outside NATSA that develop standards of importance to the public transportation industry. Work with these organizations to establish priorities consistent with the interests of organizations and suppliers within the public transportation industry.

1.2 Antitrust policy

Federal antitrust laws prohibit contracts, combinations and conspiracies in restraint of trade. Sanctions for violating the antitrust laws include civil damages (including treble damages) and criminal fines and imprisonment. The policy of NATSA, APTA and the APTA Standards Development Program is to strictly adhere to the antitrust laws.

Accordingly, standards are developed objectively for the legitimate noncompetitive purpose of promoting safe, secure and sustainable public transportation.

1.3 Disclaimer

Neither NATSA/APTA nor any person or organization contributing to the preparation of this document makes any warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the usefulness or effectiveness of any information, method or process disclosed in this material. Nor does NATSA/APTA assume any liability for the use of, or for damages arising from the use of, any information, methods or processes disclosed in this document.

No information or suggestions shall be deemed to be a recommendation nor an endorsement to use any specific manufacturer's products or any system in conflict with an existing patent right, code or regulation. This manual should not serve as a substitute for sound engineering judgment.

1.4 Implementation flexibility

NATSA/APTA's standards documents incorporate flexibility in how or if they may be implemented. Language to this effect is reflected under a sub-heading titled "Note on alternate practices." The language of this section does not apply in cases where federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations—e.g., commuter, intercity and high-speed rail operations.

1.5 Intellectual property

NATSA/APTA reserves all intellectual property rights in its standards. NATSA/APTA does not consent or allow any of its standards to be altered or modified in any respect.

1.6 Standards usage terms and conditions

NATSA/APTA standards are available to the public for use at no cost. NATSA/APTA does require that, when used, the user provides credit and acknowledges that these documents are provided free of charge by NATSA/APTA.

2. Standards program organization

The APTA Standards Development Program organizational hierarchy is outlined below:

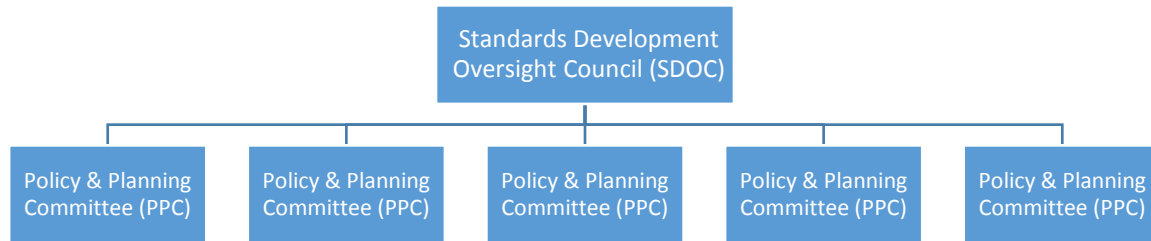
- At the highest level, the Standards Development Oversight Council (SDOC) provides overall management and direction for all standards development programs. See Section 2.1 and **Figure 1** for details.
- At the next level, a Policy & Planning Committee (PPC) is charged with the technical oversight of the working groups and reports to the SDOC. See Section 2.2 and **Figure 2** for details.
- A Technical Advisory Group (TAG) responds to the PPC when called upon to perform assigned tasks on an as-needed basis. See Section 2.3.
- Reporting to the PPC are working groups (WGs) that develop the technical content of the standard. See Section 2.4. **Figure 2** shows the relationship between the WGs and the PPC.
- Sub-working groups (SWGs) are organized by the chair of the working group on an as-needed basis. See Section 2.5.
- Criteria for participating in a working group are provided in Section 2.6.
- The role of the APTA program staff adviser is provided in Section 2.7.
- Section 2.8 contains APTA's travel and reimbursement policy.

2.1 Standards Development Oversight Council (SDOC)

The SDOC is approved and established by and works under the guidance of APTA's Executive Committee to provide direction to the Standards Development Program from a multimodal perspective that encompasses the interests and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders. In keeping with the spirit of industry consensus standards development, the SDOC will be cognizant of the issue of balance among participating members representing the diverse interests of the public transportation industry as a whole.

The core membership of the SDOC will be made up by the chairs of each Policy & Planning Committee plus others in order to provide balance.

FIGURE 1
Standards Development Oversight Council



Note: Only one SDOC for the whole APTA Standards Development Program

The purpose of the SDOC shall be:

- to promote the support for and use of standards in the public transportation industry;
- to set overall direction for the development and maintenance of standards in the public transportation industry;
- to establish priority programs among APTA's modal standards development working groups;
- to coordinate standards development activities among the modal groups as well as other organizations outside APTA, including the federal government and international agencies; and
- to develop and manage the standards budget activities of APTA.

This document does not go into any depth regarding the working of the SDOC, as the primary purpose of this manual is to describe the background and process description as they pertain to the development of standards, which involves the PPCs, WGs and SWGs.

For more information regarding the work of this council and its bylaws, refer to the APTA SDOC Bylaws (latest revision).

2.2 Policy & Planning Committees (PPCs)

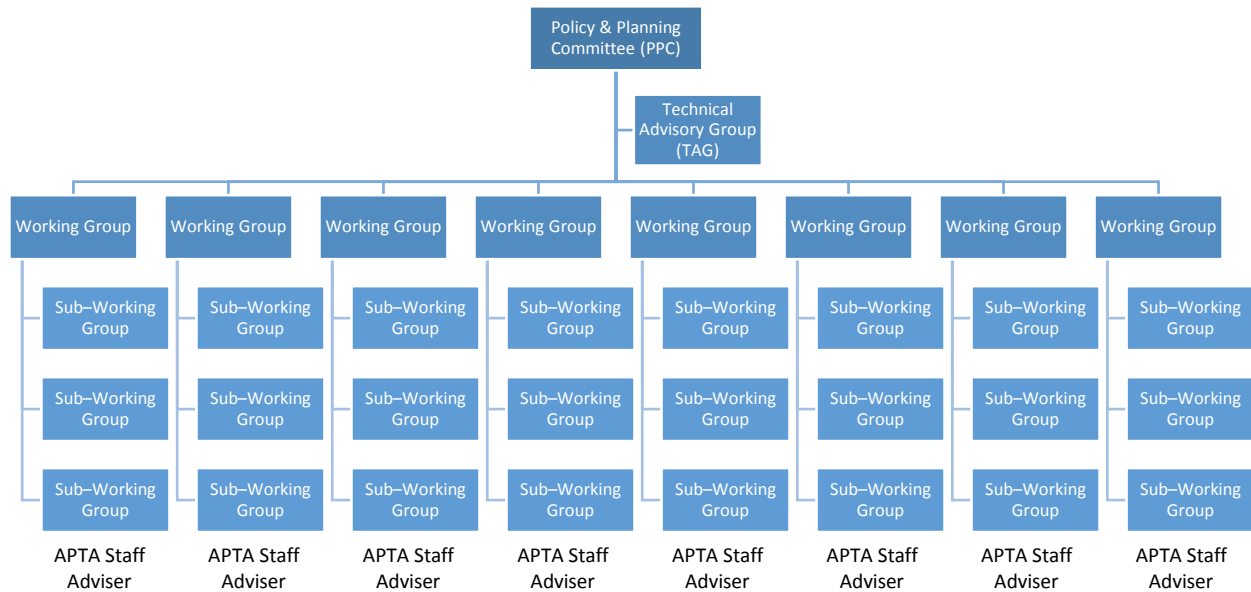
APTA has several standards development programs. Each program will have a PPC organization, as shown in **Figure 2**.

The chair of each PPC will be a member of the SDOC. The PPC membership consists of the general managers (or designees) of each operating or planned transit system, business members, consultants, and government representatives as ex-officio members. Membership of commercial organizations is limited to no more than 40 percent of the total PPC membership.

The PPC has responsibility for:

- setting the broad policy to be followed by WGs;
- approving the WGs' annual budgets and approving major changes to the budgets (if required);
- approving the WGs' priorities;
- authorizing implementation of documents approved by the WGs;
- approving due process of all documents created by associated WGs;
- approving priorities within the Standards Development Program; and
- authorizing publication of documents approved by the WGs.

FIGURE 2
Policy & Planning Committee (PPC)



Notes:

1. Each program will have its own PPC, working groups and sub-working groups.
2. Working groups are formed on an as-needed basis by the PPC.
3. SWGs are formed by the chair of the WG on an as-needed basis.
4. The number of SWGs is dependent on the amount of work to be performed.
5. On completion of their assigned task(s), SWGs may be disbanded.
6. Members of an SWG are typically members of the working group that formed the SWG.

2.3 Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Membership of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) consists of senior experts from transit systems and other industry stakeholders. This ad hoc group is formed and dissolved as needed. This group responds to requests from the SDOC to review and make recommendations on documents developed by the WGs. The TAG may be called upon to perform the following functions:

- Recommend a small number of focus areas for the standards development effort. The focus areas should have high potential to produce meaningful safety improvements. By way of example, possible focus areas include vehicle inspection and maintenance, vehicle crashworthiness, grade crossings, operating practices, track, escalators and elevators, emergency preparedness, and station design.
- Identify related industry standards development efforts so that duplication is avoided.
- Recommend a policy or guiding philosophy to determine when a subject should be addressed and whether it should be a standard or a *Recommended Practice*.
- Make recommendations for key personnel to recruit from both transit agencies and suppliers to lead the development effort in each of the recommended focus areas.

2.4 Working groups (WGs)

As determined by the PPC, working groups are organized for the purpose of developing standards. WG members develop individual work plans and schedules. The chair of the WG may form SWGs for the purpose of initial development of these standards. Members of the WGs are typically staff from transit systems, business members, consultants, suppliers and vendors, subject matter experts, and others as deemed necessary.

2.4.1 Working group membership

- Membership is open to anyone wishing to participate.
- Membership requires a commitment to:
 - attend meetings in person, by webinar or by conference call;
 - exercise voting responsibility within prescribed time limits as may be established; and
 - contribute and share expertise throughout the development process of standards documents.
- Repeatedly failing to complete ballots before the close of the voting period, not attending meetings or an absence for a period of 12 months will result in the member being removed from the WG.

2.4.2 Working group objectives

Working groups shall have the following objectives:

- Recruit and maintain a membership that is broadly representative of the transit industry.
- Develop industry standards through a consensus process.
- Identify, develop and maintain standards for transit system design and/or operation where these standards have a high potential to lead to safety improvements and operational efficiency.
- Provide guidance to the federal government on transit industry safety research needs.
- Provide a forum for transit industry professionals to share safety experience and best practices.

2.4.3 Working group responsibilities

Each working group, including the leadership, with the assistance of the APTA staff adviser, is responsible for the following:

- Developing a work plan and schedule.
- Organizing, setting the agenda for and scheduling meetings.
- Appointing SWGs to address individual work plan items.
- Chairing and ensuring productive meetings.
- Ensuring that summary minutes of meetings are developed, recorded and distributed.
- Identifying resources or research needed to execute the work plan.
- Seeking and maintaining broad-based industry representation of the membership.
- Drafting the initial versions of each document. Once a workable draft is developed by the members, the staff adviser provides formatting, quality and change control for refinements and revisions to the document.

2.5 Sub-working groups (SWGs)

Working group members may organize themselves into sub-working groups to execute portions of the work plan. SWGs develop initial drafts of proposed standards for full WG review and approval.

An SWG can be used when it is necessary to perform a rapid review of whether an existing document needs to be reaffirmed or completely revised. This recommendation is then provided to the full WG, which in turn will work with APTA for a final determination.

2.6 Role of program staff adviser

The following is the role of the APTA staff adviser:

- Ensure development and publication of all standards.
- Arrange to support the WGs and SWGs, either with APTA staff, contractors or volunteer members.

- Assist the WG chair with administrative functions such as arranging working group meetings, taking and distributing meeting minutes, keeping an accurate membership and communication list, and distributing work products for review.
- Provide technical expertise to help the WG develop and implement its work plan. If support is provided by contractors, they will be recognized consultants to the transit industry.
- Review proposals for new standards (see Section 4.1 to review the full list of document types).
- Manage allocated budget.

2.7 Role of the standards document manager

The following are the responsibilities of the standards document manager:

- Maintain the APTA Standards Development Program website.
- Arrange to send documents for public comment, CEO approval, and finally to the Policy & Planning Committee for approval to publish.
- Coordinate and distribute comments to respective program managers for resolution.

2.8 Travel and reimbursement policy

The APTA Standards Development Program strictly adheres to the policies and procedures defined in the “APTA Standards Travel Reimbursement Policy_Rev 1.” The travel policy document can be obtained by requesting it from the relevant standards program manager.

3. Processes for document development

This section refers to the processes that must be followed when proposing to:

- a. Develop a new standard (see Section 4.1 to review the full list of document types); or
- b. Make changes to an existing standard; or
- c. Begin an appeals process.

3.1 Process for development of a new standard

The following is an outline of the required steps to be taken when proposing a new standard. This is also shown in **Figure 3**. Also see Appendix D for a form to be used by a proposer.

- a. Any party may propose a new standard (see Section 4.1 to review the full list of document types).
- b. A copy of the proposal should be submitted to APTA at:

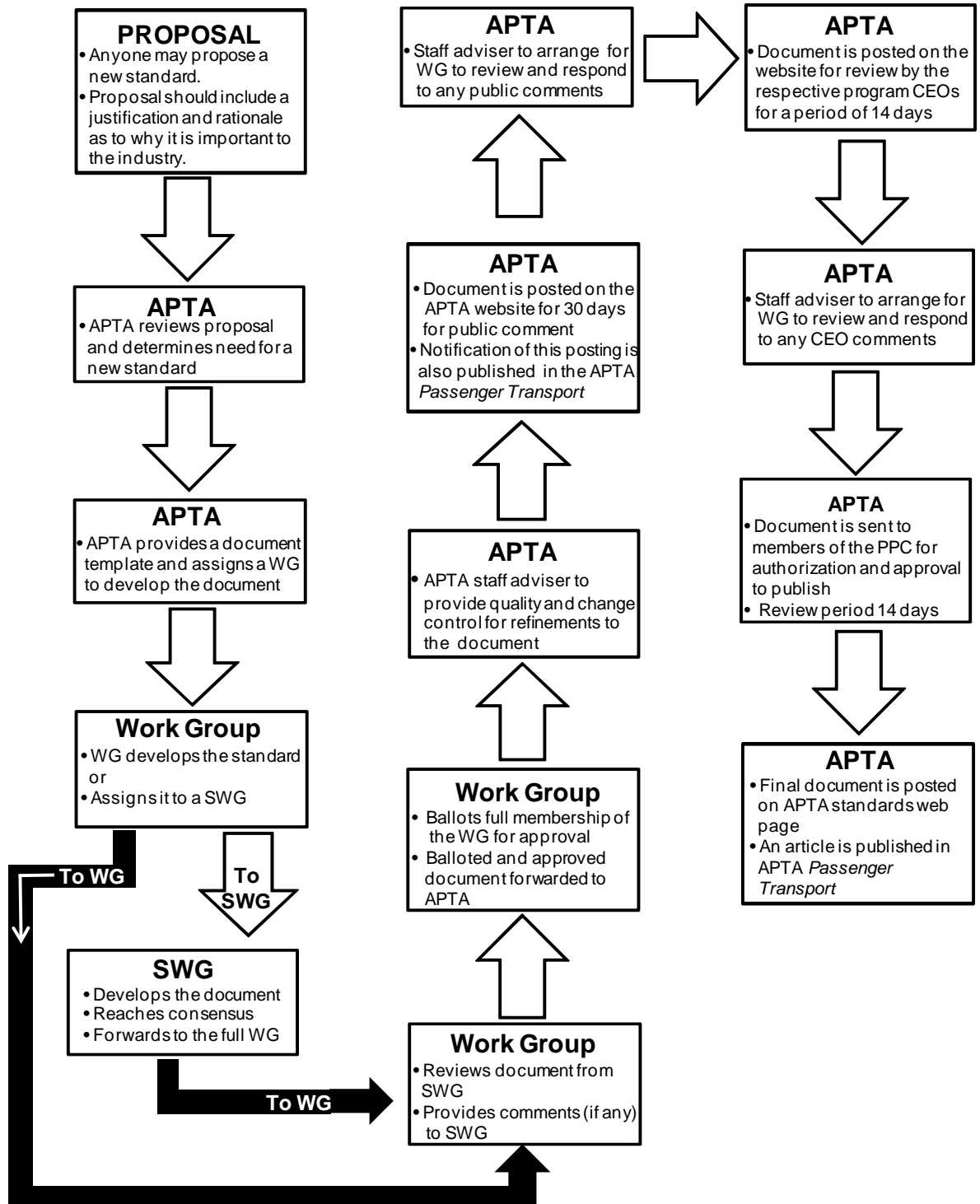
American Public Transportation Association
Director, Standards Program
1300 I Street, NW, Suite 1200 East
Washington, DC 20005

Or complete the online form at www.apta.com/resources/standards/Pages/default.aspx.

- c. The proposal should contain at a minimum the following elements:
 - proposer information
 - description of proposed standard
 - justification/rationale (why this is important for the industry)
 - research needed (if any)
 - related standards/work (if any)
 - stakeholders

- d. APTA staff will review the proposal and direct it to the appropriate PPC.
- e. If directed by the PPC, APTA staff will help assign a WG to develop a draft standard.
- f. APTA staff will forward the document template to the chair of the WG.
- g. The WG chair will organize a sub-working group, if necessary, from the WG membership or invite others as needed.
- h. The membership of the working group will:
 - Review the work of the SWG
 - Discuss and resolve any outstanding comments
 - Vote on the document as defined by Section 3.5
- i. APTA staff will provide formatting, quality and change control for refinements and revisions to the document.
- j. APTA staff will arrange for the document to be posted to the APTA website for 30 days for public comment, and if directed by the PPC it will also be sent to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG).
- k. Any comments from the public comment review cycle will be forwarded to the WG for review and resolution.
- l. APTA staff will next forward the document to the relevant APTA CEO Committee for 14 days for review, comments and approval.
- m. Any comments from the CEO Committee review will be sent to the WG members for their review and resolution.
- n. Finally, the document will be sent to the Policy & Planning Committee (PPC) for a 14-day period for authorization to publish.
 - PPC members will be asked to approve the document on the basis that the document development process was followed.
- o. When authorized by the PPC, the document will be released for publication by APTA, and notification of this will be provided by:
 - a post on APTA's website, and
 - an article in APTA's Passenger Transport.

FIGURE 3
Process Diagram for Creating a New Document



3.2 Process for making changes to an existing standard

Anyone may propose a change to a previously approved standard.

- a. Proposers need to provide specific changes. Where practical, these changes should be made by marking up the published version with tracked changes to show deletions and additions. These proposed changes and/or corrections should contain the exact text proposed and a clear statement of the reasons for the change.
- b. A copy of the proposed changes and supporting rationale should be submitted to APTA at:

American Public Transportation Association
Director, Standards Program
1300 I Street, NW, Suite 1200 East
Washington, DC 20005

Or complete the online form at www.apta.com/resources/standards/Pages/default.aspx.

- c. APTA will review the proposed changes and act in one of the following ways:
 - Deny the proposed changes as having no merit.
 - If the change corrects an obvious error or the proposed changes are minor (meaning that it does not change the intent of the document), APTA may simply reissue the corrected document and advise the concerned party, working group chair and the PPC.
 - If the proposed change has merit, and incorporation of it could change the intent or application of the document, then APTA will refer the proposed changes back to the WG that developed the document for consideration and also advise the PPC. See Sections 4.13 and 4.14 to review the procedure for changing document types.
- d. The WG will review and revise the document as appropriate.
- e. On completion of the work, the membership of the WG will ballot its members for consensus.
- f. APTA staff will review the work and provide formatting, quality, change control and revisions to the document.
- g. The document will next be posted on the APTA website for 30 days for public comment.
- h. Any comments from the public comment review cycle will be forwarded to the WG chair for resolution and disposition.
- i. After resolution of the comments, WG members will be required to vote on the document and send the approved document to APTA.
- j. APTA staff will next forward the document to the relevant CEO Committee for review and comments for a period of 14 days.
- k. Any comments from the CEO's review cycle will be sent by APTA to the WG chair for review, resolution and disposition of comments.
- l. Finally the document will be sent to the Policy & Planning Committee (PPC) for a 14-day period for authorization to publish. The PPC's task is to ensure that the document development process has been followed.
- m. When authorized, the document will be released for publication, and notification of this will be provided by:
 - a post on the APTA website; and
 - an article in APTA's Passenger Transport.

3.3 Appeals process

- a. Anyone can appeal against a published standard document.
- b. The appeal must be formerly submitted in writing to:
 American Public Transportation Association
 Director, Standards Program
 Email: standards@apta.com
 1300 I Street, NW, Suite 1200 East
 Washington, DC 20005
 Or complete the online form at www.apta.com/resources/standards/Pages/default.aspx.
- c. The written appeal must contain at a minimum the following items:
 - appellant's information
 - description of the appeal
 - justification/rationale
 - who or what is impacted
- d. APTA will review the appeal.
- e. If there is no merit to the appeal, APTA will respond back to the appellant and state the reasons why no further action will be taken.
- f. If APTA considers that there is merit in the appeal, it will follow the procedure set forth in Section 3.2 of this document.

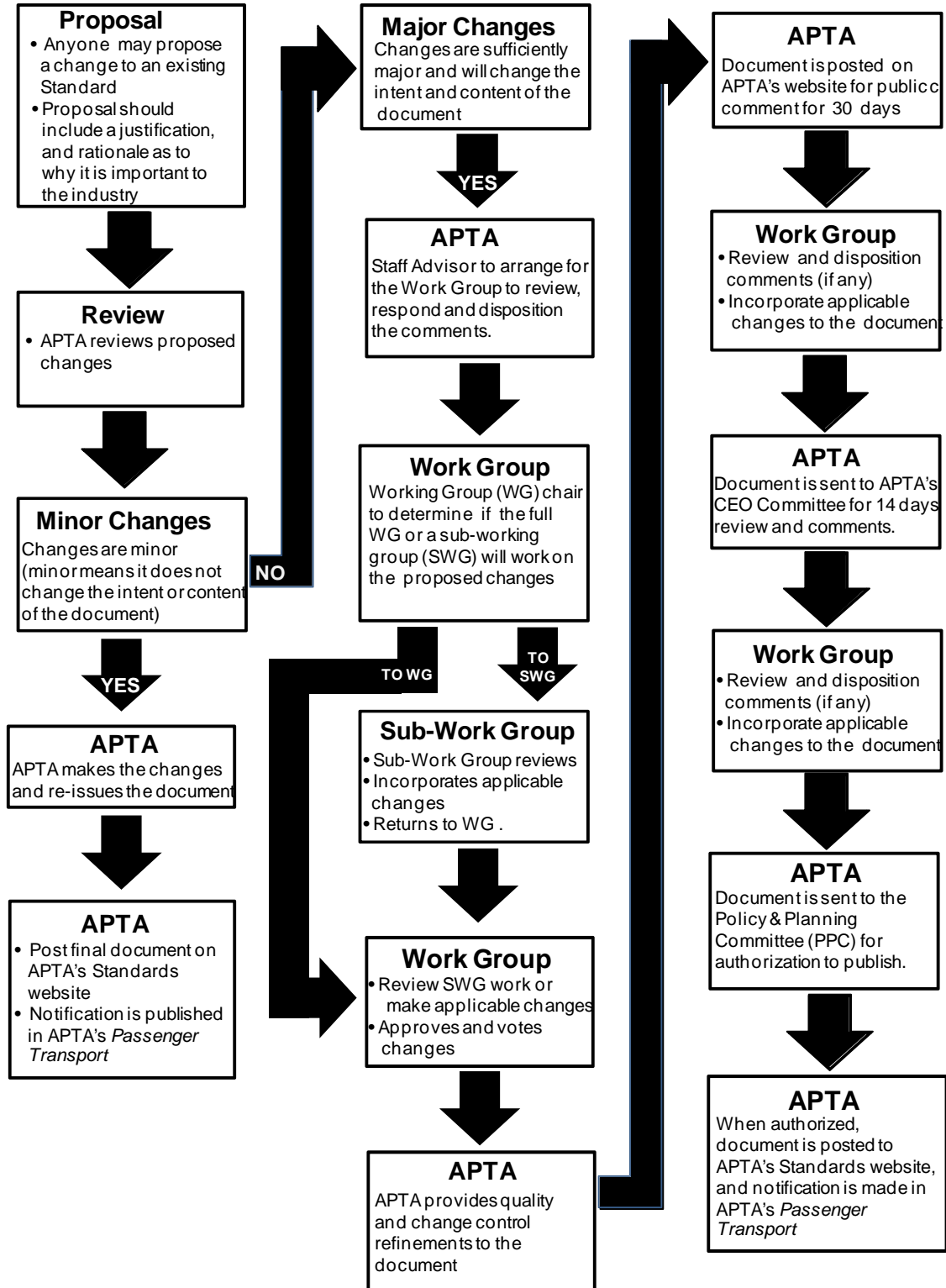
3.4 Standards life cycle

APTA, as a standards development organization, maintains an established process for the development, maintenance and configuration management of standards. These documents have a validity period of five years from the latest date of publication. At the end of the specified period, APTA will work with the current WG to review and update these documents as necessary. When possible, APTA will arrange for the original document author(s) to be included as part of the review process.

At the end of the review cycle, the document will be reaffirmed, revised or withdrawn:

- **Reaffirmed:** This occurs when the intent and technical content of the document are still valid. Amendments that offer minor revisions or reformatting of the document to update its style can be made and reissued under reaffirmation. APTA will reissue the corrected document with the same document number and differentiate it by adding a revision number. The document will also show the original publication date and date when reaffirmed. Example: Old document number was APTA RT-VIM-S-016-03. Reaffirmed document will be numbered APTA RT-VIM-S-016-03, Rev. 1. The front page of the document will show a) First Published date, and b) First Revision date (reaffirmed). APTA will also advise the concerned parties, the appropriate WG and the PPC. The standard is then published and posted on the APTA standards website with a notification in the APTA Passenger Transport newspaper. The document will then have a new five-year validity period.
- **Revised:** A revision to the document is required if the standard's intent or technical content need to be changed or updated. When all comments have been addressed and dispositioned, a ballot of the WG approval, public review period, CEO Committee review and PPC approval will be required. The document approval path is identified in **Figure 4**. APTA will reissue the document with a revised document number showing last published date and date when revised. Example: Old document number was APTA RT-VIM-S-016-03. Revised document will be numbered APTA RT-VIM-S-016-03, Rev. 1. The front page of the document will show a) First Published date, and b) First Revision date. The standard is then published and posted on the APTA standards website with a notification in the APTA Passenger Transport newspaper. The document will then have a new five-year validity period.

FIGURE 4
Process for Making Changes to an Existing Document



- **Withdrawn:** A standard could be withdrawn for any reason and at any time. This will require a ballot of the WG for a recommendation to withdraw, PPC approval (14 days), CEO Committee approval (14 days) and public notification period (30 days). From start to finish the process for withdrawing a document will not exceed 90 days. Notification to this effect will be made on the APTA standards website and in APTA's Passenger Transport.

3.5 Voting and balloting requirements

When a document requires a vote for authorization to proceed to the next consensus step, the following requirements must be met:

- To constitute a quorum, APTA must receive votes from at least two-thirds of the membership.
- Of those votes cast, at least 75 percent must be in the affirmative.
- An absent ballot will count toward the quorum requirement only.

Voting and balloting are conducted electronically. The working group chair, APTA staff adviser or document manager shall notify the full working group when a proposed document is ready for approval. This notification shall include:

- An explanation of why the action is being proposed
- Review and explanation of substantive revisions during the development process
- Announcement of the closing date for the balloting/voting period

The voting ballot form shall contain four responses:

- Approval as written
- Approval with some minor or editorial revision; suggested revisions should be provided in subsequent questions on ballot
- Disapproval citing a major objection or concern; concerns should be provided in subsequent questions on ballot
- Abstention; reasons for abstaining should be provided in subsequent questions on ballot

The voting period shall not be shorter than two weeks and not longer than 30 calendar days, as determined by the APTA staff adviser.

While each individual on a working group may submit a ballot, ballots are to be counted on an organizational level. Each organization, company, firm, agency or railroad shall have one vote, regardless of the number of ballots submitted and the number of members participating. The counted ballot of an entity shall be the most restrictive ballot submitted by a representative of that entity, unless the APTA staff adviser is notified otherwise. Disapproval is the most restrictive possible ballot, while approval is the least restrictive. Comments from *all* submitted ballots are to be considered and resolved by the working group prior to the document proceeding to the public comment period.

In order to get a consensus of the WG, it is important that members are active participants, as described in Section 2.4.

3.6 Meeting requirements

Working groups may be required to meet several times a year and may be organized by APTA staff and/or the WG's leadership.

- a. All meetings will have an agenda to outline the purpose of the meeting, meeting minutes or notes taken and shared no more than 10 business days after the meeting.
- b. Working group leadership with support from APTA staff will preside over and facilitate meetings.
- c. Working group leadership will determine if the meeting will be an in-person meeting, web conference or audio conference.
- d. APTA staff will work with the WG leadership to secure a meeting space and hotel accommodations, and discuss travel reimbursements, etc., to meet requirements as defined in "APTA Standards Travel Reimbursement Policy_Rev 1."
- e. Meeting notifications will be sent to participants at least 35 to 45 days in advance of the face-to-face meeting and/or 10 days for web or audio conferences.
- f. Meetings are open to all stakeholders (including nonmembers).

3.7 Document format

APTA standards use a format closely based on the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Standards Style Guide. See Appendix C for the format to be used when developing a new standard or converting a standard from an old format.

3.8 Notification of standards publication

When a document is ready for publication, APTA staff will:

- a. Upload it to the APTA standards website at www.apta.com/resources/standards/Pages/default.aspx.
- b. Publish an article briefly describing the contents of the document.
- c. Notify the respective working groups and others as seen appropriate.

3.9 Records retention

The records of the APTA Standards Development Program, its council, the Policy & Planning Committee staff, and working or sub-working groups shall be maintained for a reasonable time at APTA headquarters, where they can be made available for inspection or audit by members or the appropriate certification or accreditation body and public stakeholders, at the discretion of the council or APTA's legal counsel. An agenda, minutes and attendance roster shall be maintained by APTA staff for all council, Policy & Planning Committee and WG/SWG meetings for a period not to exceed seven years.

All other documents maintained by the working groups or staff to develop a standards-related document will be discarded at the time of publication. Information related to records retention (inclusive of documents, ballots, agendas, summaries, minutes and attendance rosters) will be stored on collaboration web pages and supported by a centralized database.

3.10 References to other standards, federal regulations and regulatory bodies

In the development process of the standards (see Section 4.1 to review the full list of document types), APTA will ensure that other APTA standards, federal regulations and other regulatory bodies are referenced as appropriate.

4. Document development policies

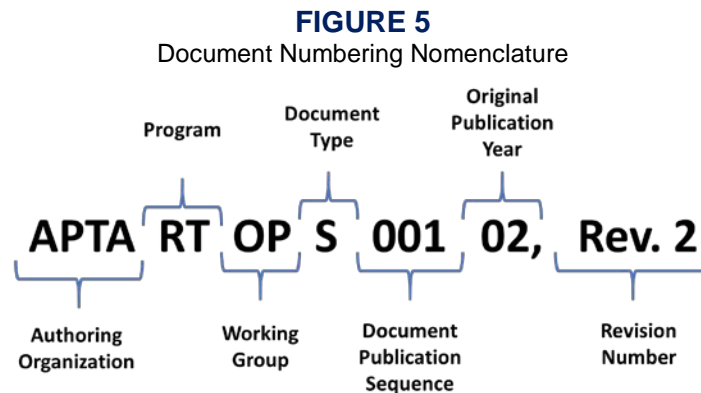
4.1 Types of documents

The following are six types of documents developed by APTA:

1. Standards
2. *Recommended Practices*
3. Guidelines
4. White papers
5. Technical specifications
6. Training/educational materials

4.2 Document numbering nomenclature

Documents defined in Section 4.1 will use an established document numbering nomenclature (see [Figure 5](#)). The numbering system is divided into five parts and is described further in Appendix E.



This number is assigned by the document manager after the PPC has approved the document. As an example, a typical document number would be “APTA RT-OP-S-001-02, Rev. 2”:

- “APTA” shall be used at the beginning of the numbering system, indicating that the document was developed through an APTA working group.
- “RT” indicates the transit mode or type. In this example, “RT” stands for Rail Transit.
- “OP” signifies the working group that developed the document. “OP” in this case refers to the Rail Transit Operating Practices Working Group.
- “S” stands for standard. “RP” would be used for a *Recommended Practice*, “GL” for a guideline, “WP” for a white paper, etc.
- “004” is a three-digit number assigned to a document within a specific program.
- “02” is a two-digit number indicating the year the document was originally published.
- “Rev. 2” indicates the number of revisions made to the document over its entire lifecycle.

NOTE: The two-digit number indicates the year when the document was originally published and shall be retained regardless of how many times the document is revised. Revisions to the document shall be denoted in the top-right box on the first page of the document stating First Published and the date, First Revision and the date, Second Revision and the date, etc.

4.3 Document classifications

The following policy issues are discussed in the sections specified below:

- Standard vs. *Recommended Practices* (Section 4.11)
- Mixed-purpose standards documents (Section 4.12)
- Upgrading a *Recommended Practice* to a standard (Section 4.13)
- Downgrading a standard to a *Recommended Practice* (Section 4.14)
- Changes to the name of a document (Section 4.15)
- Safety vs. service reliability and/or efficiency (Section 4.16)
- Compliance with standards (Section 4.17)

4.4 Standards vs. *Recommended Practices*

Unnecessary standards can increase costs and severely limit a transit system's operating flexibility. However, making truly safety-critical actions voluntary leads to lack of credibility and confidence in the transit industry. Adopting safety-critical standards is one of the ways a transit agency can demonstrate its compliance with industry best safety practice.

One of the most significant and persistent challenges to APTA's Standards Program is reaching consensus on the basis for making the decision on whether a document should become a standard or a *Recommended Practice*. APTA's initial guidance given to working groups charged with making this decision is shown in a decision tree (see [Figure 6](#)). The decision tree leads to a standard if the document addresses a safety-critical subject and to a *Recommended Practice* in all other cases. The decision tree is a valuable tool to make an initial decision. If the decision tree leads to a standard, then more guidance is required from the working group that justifies this decision.

For the purposes of the transit systems program, a standard establishes mandatory requirements that must be met (however, more than one acceptable way to meet these mandatory requirements often exists). On the other hand, a *Recommended Practice* describes an approach that is generally accepted as desirable and successful. A *Recommended Practice* could describe one of the acceptable ways to meet a standard.

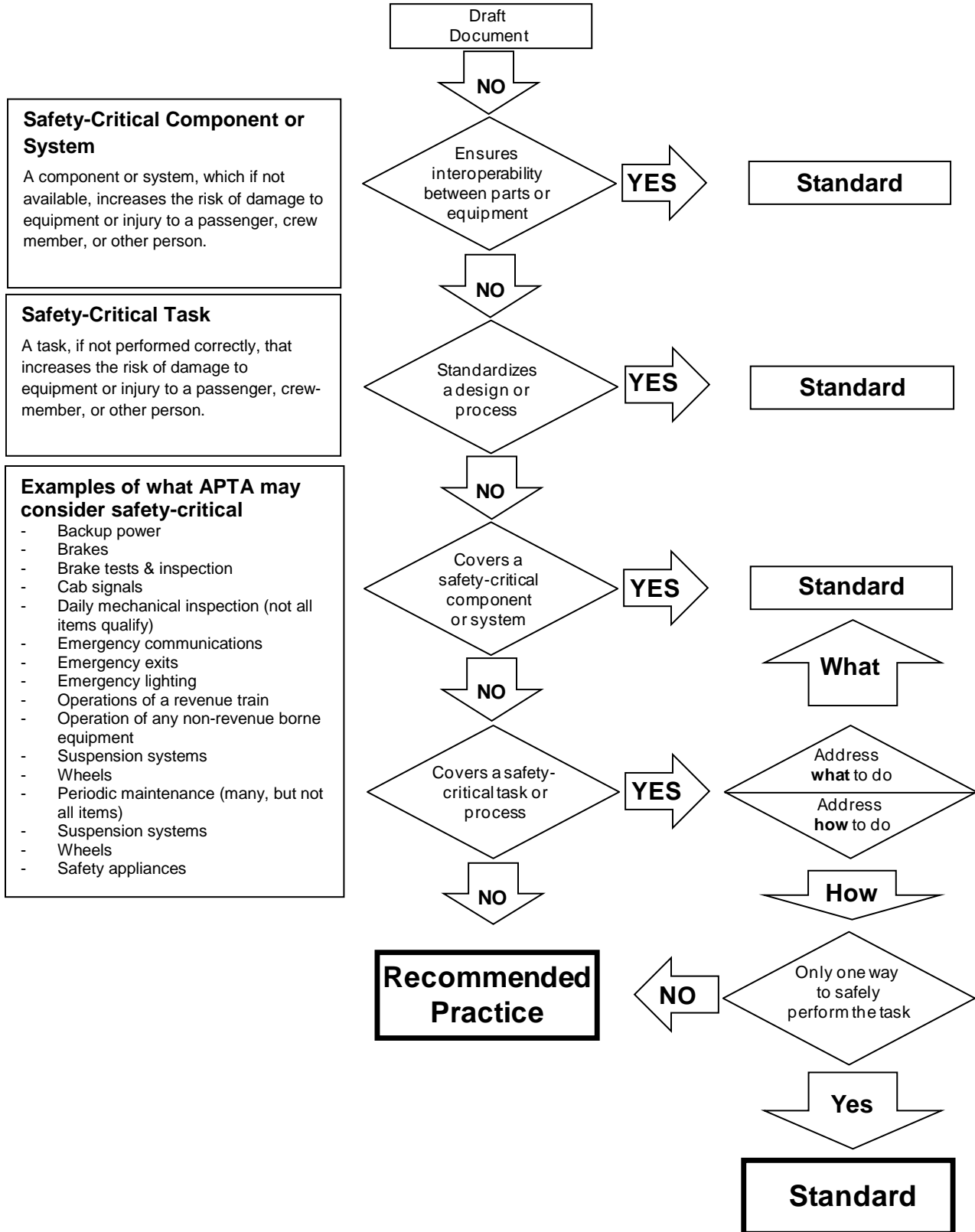
4.5 Characteristics of a standard

Standard: A generally accepted practice, method or prescribed manner by which something is achieved by authority as a rule, measure of quality or value.

A standard should be developed when the document:

- a. covers a system, component, process or task that is safety-critical; or
- b. ensures interoperability between transit systems or equipment; or
- c. standardizes a design or process.

FIGURE 6
Decision Tree: Standard vs. *Recommended Practice*



4.6 Characteristics of a *Recommended Practice*

Recommended Practice: An established or usual way of doing something usually based on repeated actions or widely established processes.

A *Recommended Practice* should be developed when:

- a. the document describes only one of several acceptable approaches; or
- b. the document is tutorial in nature; or
- c. the document does not meet one of the characteristics for a standard; or
- d. consensus could not be reached that the document should be a standard.

4.7 Characteristics of a guideline

Guideline: Represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions and aims to streamline a particular process according to a set routine or practice.

A guideline should be developed when:

- a. the document describes how to perform a particular process using a set of accepted practices; or
- b. the document is tutorial in nature; or
- c. the document does not meet one of the characteristics of a standard or *Recommended Practice*.

A guideline may be issued by and used by transit industry professionals to make routine processes somewhat uniform and more predictable, and presumably improve quality and safety.

4.8 Characteristics of a white paper

White paper: An authoritative report or guide written expressly to provide information about a complex issue that presents the industry's prevailing philosophy on the subject matter.

A white paper should be developed when:

- a. the document describes how to address a specific problem or make a decision; or
- b. the document is designed to inform and invite comments/opinions; or
- c. the document does not meet one of the characteristics for a standard, *Recommended Practice* or guideline.

4.9 Characteristics of a technical specification

Technical specification: An authoritative report or guide written expressly to illustrate information about a complex issue or process.

A technical specification should be developed when:

- a. the document can best describe and/or illustrate an acceptable approach or practice; or
- b. the document is tutorial in nature; or
- c. the document does not meet the minimum set of characteristics for a standard, *Recommended Practice*, guideline or white paper; or
- d. consensus could not be reached on the best method to present this information.

4.10 Characteristics of a training and/or educational document

Training/educational document: Represents teaching or professional developmental resources that can be used to improve one's skills or knowledge.

A document should be considered training/educational when:

- a. the document describes several acceptable approaches or practices; or
- b. the document is teaching in nature; or
- c. the document does not meet the minimum set of characteristics for a standard, *Recommended Practice*, guideline, white paper or technical specification; or
- d. the document provides some form of training, knowledge evaluation and post-tests.

4.11 Process to select a standard vs. a *Recommended Practice*

A standards program may include documents that contain both requirements and recommendations. To provide consistency and to reduce controversy, APTA developed the following guidance to help make the decision as to whether a document should be developed as a standard or as a *Recommended Practice*. See also **Figure 6** for a decision tree showing how to determine if a document should be a standard or a *Recommended Practice*.

- a. If a document does not address a safety-critical subject, then that document should be developed as a *Recommended Practice*.
- b. If a document is to be developed as a standard, a history of safety problems to support the need for the standard should exist; otherwise the document should be a *Recommended Practice*.
- c. If the document is to be developed as a standard, there should be a likelihood that the safety benefits of implementation will outweigh the cost; otherwise the document should be a *Recommended Practice*.
- d. If the document contains both standards requirements and recommendations, refer to Section 4.12.
- e. All standards (with the exception of Passenger Rail Equipment Safety Standards [PRESS]) should contain "Note on alternate practices" clause that allows transit systems the flexibility to provide equivalent safety through an alternate approach to the standard.

The word "shall" is used in standard documents to indicate mandatory requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the standard and from which no deviation is permitted unless the transit system can demonstrate that equivalent safety is achieved through an alternate approach.

The word "should" is used in *Recommended Practice* documents to indicate that, among several options, one is recommended as particularly suitable—without mentioning or excluding others—or that a certain course of action is preferred but not required.

4.12 Mixed-purpose standards documents

Some documents may contain both standards and recommended practices. The following are three ways to handle this situation:

- **Option 1:** Labeling the document "Standard" but including only the provisions that are standards in the body of the document. The body of the document refers to an informative appendix that contain the recommended practices.
- **Option 2:** Labeling the document "Standards and Recommended Practices" and clearly indicating in the text of the document which provisions are standards and which are recommended practices.
- **Option 3:** Splitting the document into two documents. The first, labeled "Standard," contains only the provisions that are standards. This document refers to the second document. The second document,

titled “Guidelines for Implementing Standards for...” and labeled “*Recommended Practice*,” contains the recommended practices.

Option 1 has in the past caused the least reaction. It is a traditional means that other standards development organizations use. In addition, legal precedents clearly treat an informative appendix to the standard as not part of the requirements imposed by the standard. Option 2 has the potential to cause considerable confusion. Option 3 leads to fears that the need to have documents would be detrimental.

As a result, Option 1 will be used to handle documents that contain both standards and recommended practices. For all APTA standards documents, notes within the body of the standards will be treated as not part of the requirements imposed by the standard.

4.13 Transition from a *Recommended Practice* to a standard

A *Recommended Practice* may be upgraded to a standard if a complete survey of every affected party in the United States and Canada indicates universal adoption of the *Recommended Practice*. A complete survey is defined as a survey with a 100 percent response rate from all affected parties. No other content revisions to the document shall be considered in the same revision of the upgrade other than those required specifically for the upgrade.

Any document that has been upgraded as a result of a complete survey shall indicate the document’s upgraded status in the first upgraded publication of the document.

The document will contain the following indications of the upgrade:

- a. Language placed at the end of the “Scope and purpose” section on the cover page of the document shall read: “The latest revision of this document was upgraded from a *Recommended Practice* to a standard after a complete survey of all affected parties indicated universal application of the content herein. A full list of the affected parties can be found in Appendix A.”
- b. Language placed at the end of the “Introduction” section of the document shall read: “The latest revision of this document was upgraded from a *Recommended Practice* to a standard after a complete survey of all affected parties indicated universal application of the content herein. A full list of the affected parties can be found in Appendix A.”
- c. Appendix A of the document shall contain:
 - a narrative regarding the rationale for the upgrade of the document; and
 - a full list of the affected parties surveyed.

All subsequent published revisions within 15 years of the first upgraded publication of the document shall retain in Appendix A of the document:

- a. a narrative regarding the rationale for the upgrade of the document;
- b. information regarding when the document was upgraded; and
- c. a full list of the affected parties surveyed.

All subsequent publications of the document shall contain the following language below the “Document history” table: “This document was upgraded from a *Recommended Practice* to a standard in Rev. X.”

4.14 Transition from a standard to a *Recommended Practice*

A standard shall be demoted to a *Recommended Practice* if none of the contents of the standard:

- a. ensure interoperability between parts or equipment;
- b. standardize a process or design;
- c. address a safety-critical component or system;
- d. address a safety-critical task or process;
- e. address what to do for a safety-critical task or process; or
- f. are not the only way to safely carry out a safety-critical task or process.

Any document that has been downgraded shall indicate the document's downgraded status in the first downgraded publication of the document.

The document will contain the following indications of the downgrade:

- a. Language placed at the end of the "Scope and purpose" section on the cover page of the document shall read: "The latest revision of this document was downgraded from a standard to a *Recommended Practice*, as none of the contents herein contained material meeting the requirements of an APTA standard."
- b. Language placed at the end of the "Introduction" section of the document shall read: "The latest revision of this document was downgraded from a standard to a *Recommended Practice*, as none of the contents herein contained material meeting the requirements of an APTA standard."

All subsequent publications of the document shall contain the following language below the "Document history" table: "This document was downgraded from a standard to a *Recommended Practice* in Rev. X."

4.15 Changes to the name of a document

Any document that undergoes a name change as part of the revision process shall indicate the change in name within the first published revision of the document with the new name and any revisions of the document published within five years of the name change.

The first published revision of the document with the new name and any revisions of the document published within five years of the name change shall contain the following:

- a. At the beginning of the "Summary" section on the cover page of the document, language shall read: "This [standard/*Recommended Practice*/etc.] was titled [previous title] in the previous publication of this document."
- b. At the beginning of the "Introduction" section of the document, italicized language shall read: "This introduction is not part of [document number], [document name], ([previous name of document immediately preceding the renamed revision])."

Additionally, all revisions to a document within the 15 years after the renaming of that document shall contain the following language below the "Document history" table: "This document was retitled to its current title from [previous name] as part of Rev. X. For all previous publications of this document prior to Rev. X, unless otherwise indicated, this document was titled [previous title]."

4.16 Safety vs. service reliability and/or efficiency

Safety is the foundation and first priority of the program. However, improvements in service reliability and/or efficiency are important secondary goals. Only documents that clearly address safety improvements will be

drafted as standards. Documents that stray from a safety focus into service reliability and/or efficiency improvements are not standards. They will be developed as *Recommended Practices* or guidelines.

4.16.1 Definitions of “safety-critical”

- “Safety-critical component or system means a component or system that, if not available, increases the risk of damage to equipment or injury to a passenger, crew-member, or other person.” (From FRA “*Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Passenger Equipment Safety Standards*”)
- “Safety-critical task means a task that, if not performed correctly, increases the risk of damage to equipment or injury to a passenger, crew-member or other person.” (From FRA “*Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Passenger Equipment Safety Standards*”)
- “Safety-Critical – A designation placed on a system, subsystem, element, component, device, or function denoting that satisfactory operation of such is mandatory to assurance of patrons, personnel, equipment, or facility safety. Such a designation dictates incorporation of special safety design features.” (From APTA “*Guidelines for Design of Rapid Transit Facilities*”)

4.17 Compliance with standards

APTA does not have an enforcement staff. Enforcement of these standards is the responsibility of the individual transit systems. When APTA performs a safety audit, it will include a detailed review of a transit system’s compliance with the standards.

Recommended Practices are voluntary but strongly advised. If a transit system chooses not to follow a *Recommended Practice*, then it should ensure that the practice it uses is at least equivalent to the *Recommended Practice*.

Appendix A: Working group comment response form

Responses from working groups will be completed online. Nelow is a representation of what the online form looks like.



Document Number: Example: APTA RT-SCS-001--05, Rev. 1
Document Name: Example: Vintage/Heritage Trolley Vehicle Equipment

Comment Response Form

Reviewer <small>(Full Name, Phone & Email)</small>	Page#	Section#	Line#	Comments	Resolution (by Working Group)

Note: Use additional pages if needed.

Appendix B: Public comment and CEO Committee comment response form


Comment responses for the public comment phase and the CEO Committee comment phase will be completed online. Below is a representation of what the online form looks like:

Submit a Comment

Document Title: *


APTA-RT-OP-S-019-13 ▼

Date Submitted:

8/13/2018 

Submitted By:

Email:



*Document Section:

*Original Text:

*Proposed Text:

Submit

Appendix C: Template for standards documents



APTA STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

XXXX

American Public Transportation Association
1300 I Street, NW, Suite 1200 East, Washington, DC 20006

Add type of document: Standard, Recommended Practice, etc.

APTA RP-xxx-00x-16, Rev. x

First Published: xxxx xx, 2018

First Revision: xxxx xx, 2018

Working Group Approved:

Public Comment:

CEO Committee Approval:

Policy & Planning Approval:

Name of APTA Committee

Red type is for tracking and is to be deleted before publication

Document Heading, Title Case, 26 pt. Arial Bold, Keep to Three Lines Maximum

No need to add "Standard for" or "Recommended Practice for" in title.

Abstract: xx

Keywords: xx

Summary: xx

Scope and purpose: xx

Gray box on first page only.
Replace bold type with the transit mode and document type in 9 pt Arial, roman.

This **(transit mode) (document type)** represents a common viewpoint of those parties concerned with its provisions, namely transit operating/planning agencies, manufacturers, consultants, engineers and general interest groups. The application of any recommended practices or guidelines contained herein is voluntary. In some cases, federal and/or state regulations govern portions of a transit system's operations. In those cases, the government regulations take precedence over this standard. APTA recognizes that for certain applications, the standards or practices as implemented by individual transit agencies may be either more or less restrictive than those given in this document, unless referenced in federal regulations.

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Appendix A

When document is complete, Table of Contents and List of Figures and Tables can be updated by right-clicking and choosing "Update Field."

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1 Xxx Xxxx Xxxxx..... 1



Participants

The American Public Transportation Association greatly appreciates the contributions of the [working group name], which provided the primary effort in the drafting of this document.

At the time this standard was completed, the working group included the following members:

Chair Name [body bold style], Chair
Vice Chair Name, Vice Chair

Insert names of
 participants,
 following

each one with a
 return.

Project team

Name [Times 11 pt], *Affiliation [Times 11 pt. italics]*

The following boilerplate language
 should be altered for each document
 as the working group sees fit.

Introduction

This introduction is not part of APTA RP-xxx-00x-17, Rev. x, "Name of Standard as it Appears on First Page."

APTA recommends the use of this document by:

- individuals or organizations that operate rail transit systems;
- individuals or organizations that contract with others for the operation of rail transit systems; and
- individuals or organizations that influence how rail transit systems are operated (including but not limited to consultants, designers)

The following language must be used on all standards, except
 where APTA standards are referenced in federal regulations.

Note on alternate practices

Individual rail transit systems may modify the practices in this standard to accommodate their specific equipment and mode of operation. APTA recognizes that some rail transit systems may have unique operating environments that make strict compliance with every provision of this standard impossible. As a result, certain rail transit systems may need to implement the standards and practices herein in ways that are more or less restrictive than this document prescribes. A rail transit system may develop alternates to APTA standards so long as the alternates are based on a safe operating history and are described and documented in the system's safety program plan (or another document that is referenced in the system safety program plan).

Documentation of alternate practices shall:

- identify the specific APTA rail transit safety standard requirements that cannot be met;
- state why each of these requirements cannot be met;
- describe the alternate methods used; and
- describe and substantiate how the alternate methods do not compromise safety and provide a level of safety equivalent to the practices in the APTA safety standard (operating histories or hazard analysis findings may be used to substantiate this claim).

APTA RP-xxx-00x-16, Rev. xx [Arial bold, 9.5 pt.]
Name of Document, One Line [Arial bold, 9.5 pt., color is R131, G51, B74]

Name of Document as It Appears on Cover Page,
Title Case, Arial bold, 20 pt.

1. Heading 1

1.1 Heading 2

1.1.1 Heading 3

Body text, Figure 1 text, and [URL.com](#) text.

- Bulleted
- List
 - Sub-bullet

NOTE: Note text.

TABLE 1
Table Title

Table Heading	Table Heading	Table Heading
Table text	Table text	Table text

1. Table footnote

FIGURE 1
Figure Title

APTA RP-xxx-00x-16, Rev. xx [Arial bold, 9.5 pt.]
Name of Document, One Line [Arial bold, 9.5 pt., color is R131, G51, B74]

Related APTA standards

APTA RP-xxx-00x-16, Rev. xx, “Name name name name”
APTA RP-xxx-00x-16, Rev. xx, “Name name name name”

References

xx

Definitions

example: Text goes here.

Abbreviations and acronyms

xx xx
xx xx
xx xx

Summary of document changes

- Bullet points here

Document history

Document Version	Working Group Vote	Public Comment/ Technical Oversight	CEO Approval	Policy & Planning Approval	Publish Date
First published	—	—	—	—	—
First revision	—	—	—	—	—
Second revision	—	—	—	—	—

These sections are not numbered. Appendixes follow and should be sequenced “Appendix A,” “Appendix B,” and so on.

Appendix D: Template for a proposal for a new standard or revision



Proposal for a New Standard/ Revision

Proposer Information

Name _____
Email _____
Organization _____
Phone _____

Description of proposed standard or revisions to existing standard

Justification/rationale (why is this important for the industry)

Research needed (if any)

Related standards/ work (if any)

Stake holders

APTA

Topic	
Modal Specific	
Program	
Working Group	

Resource requirements	
Time to complete	
Estimated cost	
Date PPC approved	

Appendix E: Document numbering abbreviations

Part 1: Program

AC	Accessibility
BTS	Bus Transit
PR	PRESS (Passenger Rail Equipment Safety Standards)
PROC	Procurement
RT	Rail Transit
SS	Security
SUDS	Sustainability & Urban Design
IT	Technology

Part 2: Working groups responsible for developing the document

AC (Accessibility Committee)

FRSA	Fixed Route Stop Announcements
GSM	Gap Safety Management
PCC	Paratransit Call Center
UA	Universal Accessibility

BTS (Bus Transit)

BC	Brake & Chassis (previously Steering & Suspension)
BFD	Bus Transit Facility Design
BO	Bus Operations
BMT	Bus Maintenance Training
BPG	Bus Procurement Guidelines
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
BS	Bus Safety
HT	Hybrid Technology
II	In-Plant Inspection
PE	Passenger Environment
PT	Power Train
VE	Vehicle Environment
WTY	Warranty

IT (Technology)

CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
TCIP	Transit Communication Interface Protocols
TOSS	Transit Operating Software Standards
UTFS	Universal Transit Fare System
CCS	Chip Card Security

PR (PRESS [Passenger Rail Equipment Safety Standards])

CS	Construction & Structural
E	Electrical
IM	Inspection and Maintenance
M	Mechanical
PS	Passenger Systems
WRI	Wheel-Rail Interface

PROC (Procurement)

LRP	Light-Rail Procurement
TC	Terms & Conditions
TP	Technology Procurement
PRM	Procurement Risk Management

RT Rail Transit

EE	Elevator & Escalator
EETG	Elevator & Escalator Training Guidelines
FS	Fixed Structures
OP	Operating Practices
RGC	Rail Grade Crossing
RMT	Rail Maintenance Training
RPG	Rail Procurement Guidelines
RVTG	Rail Vehicle Training Guidelines
SC	Signal & Communications
SCS	Streetcars & Vintage Trolleys
STG	Rail Signal Training Guidelines
TPG	Traction Power Training Guidelines
VIM	Vehicle Inspection & Maintenance

SS (Security)

CCS	Control and Communication Security
ECS	Enterprise Cyber-Security
SEM	Security Emergency Management
SIS	Security Infrastructure Standards (renamed Infrastructure Security Systems-ISS and merged with SRM)
SRM	Security Risk Management (renamed Infrastructure Security Systems-ISS and merged with SIS)

SUDS (Sustainability and Urban Design)

CC	Climate Change
UD	Urban Design
TAM	Transit Asset Management

SGR (State of Good Repair [integrated into SUDS as of Jan. 1, 2018])

TAM	Transit Asset Management
------------	--------------------------

Part 3: Type of document

S	Standard
RP	<i>Recommended Practice</i>
GL	Guideline
WP	White Paper
TS	Technical Specification
ED	Training & Educational

Part 4: Sequential document number

XXX Three-digit sequential number assigned by program starting with 001.

NOTE: This number is not based upon document type or publish year. The original number is always retained. When the document is revised, add “Rev. 1,” “Rev. 2,” etc. after the original number

Part 5: Publication year

YY The last two digits of the year the document was first published.

NOTE: When the document is revised, the original publish year is retained in the numbering system. The revised document shall be identified by adding “First Revision: MMM DD, YYYY” or “Second Revision: MMM DD, YYYY,” etc. below the document number.

Appendix F: Document Development Checklist

Note: Working Groups are authorized to hold one in-person meeting annually and conduct all other work via GotoMeeting or conference calls

- ☐ SDOC authorization to create relevant Standards Policy and Planning Committee, if it does not exist
- ☐ Pre-planning GotoMeeting with relevant Standards Policy and Planning Committee
 - ☐ Identify/review document proposals for development
 - ☐ Authorization to create relevant working group(s)
 - ☐ APTA Staff to create document outline, project plan, and schedule for the document's development
 - ☐ Send a call for volunteers (e.g. relevant APTA committees and public announcement via www.apta.com)
- ☐ GotoMeeting with the appropriate Working Group
 - ☐ Discussion of project goals, milestones and development schedule
 - ☐ Assignment of content sections for volunteers to contribute
 - ☐ Begin development of content (Document development can take from 1 to 14 months to complete depending on the complexity)
- ☐ Potential additional GotoMeetings with the core set of volunteers as necessary
 - ☐ Continue content development
 - ☐ Prepare working draft of document
- ☐ GotoMeeting with Working Group
 - ☐ Review initial draft from the core set of volunteers
 - ☐ Submit draft of document for editorial review and formatting
 - ☐ Complete document update based on relevant editorial remarks and formatting
 - ☐ Prepare final document for working group ballot
- ☐ Conduct Working balloting for document approval
 - ☐ If approved as written advance document to Public Comment (send to Standards Program Manager)
 - ☐ If approved with minor edits/changes; update accordingly and advance document to Public Comment
- ☐ Public Comment
 - ☐ Announcement via www.apta.com
 - ☐ 30-day public review period to solicit comments and feedback
 - ☐ At conclusion of review period all comments must be addressed and resolved
 - ☐ Revised document advanced to CEO Review
- ☐ CEO Review
 - ☐ Announcement via www.apta.com
 - ☐ 10-day public review period to solicit comments and feedback from Transit Agency/Transit CEOs
 - ☐ At conclusion of review period all comments must be addressed and resolved
 - ☐ Revised document advanced to relevant Standards Policy Planning Committee for approval
- ☐ Standards Policy and Planning Committee
 - ☐ Review document development process and procedure (not content)
 - ☐ Approval of document for publishing
 - ☐ Post to www.apta.com within 5 to 7 business days