



About Technical Standards

What are technical standards?

A **formal standard** is a document giving requirements about a technical system. It establishes uniform engineering criteria, measurements, methods, processes or practices.

A *de facto* **standard** can be a company's product or just a custom observed and regarded as good practice--but not written down--in an industry (i.e. the QWERTY keyboard layout).

Formal technical standards can be developed by a company, trade association or professional society (i.e. ANSI, NFPA, SAE). Often they are developed jointly by several organizations that work in one field.

Standards can be **voluntary or mandatory**. **Mandatory** standards may be part of a building code, business contract, law or government regulation (i.e. EPA emissions standards).¹

¹ Wikipedia. (Nov. 20, 2012). *Technical Standards*. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_standard

Have a question about standards?

Talk to the Engineering librarians:

engrref@cornell.edu / 607-254-6261

Or see us in person: 103B and 103A Carpenter Hall

Finding & using standards

CUL has access to many standards. Some notable online sources:

- ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials)
- IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers)
- ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standards

These and other sources can be found at:
guides.library.cornell.edu/standards

We can often quickly order and download individual standards if we don't already have access to them.

Standards all around you



ASTM D4263 - Standard Practice for Labeling Art Materials for Chronic Health Hazards: Mandatory standard for children's art supplies (i.e. crayons) labeled as 'non-toxic'



ISO 9000 & ISO 9001 - Quality Management Systems: A group of standards regarding benchmarks in customer service and quality control. The original version was based on military specifications.



SAE 10W-40 - Synthetic Motor Oil: A standard of viscosity for motor oil for automobiles. Developed by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE).



USB 2.0 - Universal Serial Bus: Initially developed by a group of 7 companies for easier interconnection of computer peripherals.