

ASB Guide 001
Updated, 2018

**ASB Manual for Standards, Best Practice
Recommendations, and Technical Reports**



ASB Manual for Standards, Best Practice Recommendations, and Technical Reports

Approved by the Academy Standards Board for use by the
AAFS Standards Board, LLC. March 2016

Updated and approved March 2018



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Foreword

The AAFS has established an organization dedicated to developing documentary standards for forensics. The document is intended to assist the consensus bodies and working groups in drafting documents to be published by the AAFS Standards Board.

All hyperlinks and web addresses shown in this document are current as the publication date of this standard.

Keywords: *Style, editing, layout, requirements, patents, standards, technical reports, best practice recommendations*

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ASB Manual for Standards, Best Practice Recommendations, and Technical Reports

1 Preface

This manual was developed to provide guidance for preparing documents that will be published by the AAFS Standards Board.

This Manual draws heavily upon the following sources:

- *ANSI Style Guide-Sheet-2003*¹
- *How to Write Standards*, International Organization for Standardization (ISO)²
- *Recommended Practice for the Designation and Organization of Standards*, ANSI/SES 1:2013, The Society for Standards Professionals (SES)³

Each standard (Std), technical report (TR) and best practice recommendation (BPR) by consensus bodies of the AAFS Standards Board shall conform to this manual. The purpose is to ensure consistency in format, and to maximize usability of the documents. When deviance from this manual is recommended by a drafting working group of a consensus body that consensus body shall ask the Secretariat for permission and such deviation shall be noted in the Foreword to the document.

2 General Guidance

The following points should be observed when writing an ASB document.

- 1) ASB encourages the use of plain language, to the extent possible, in its publications. It is recognized that some very specialized terminology may be necessary, but such terminology should be kept to a minimum.
- 2) The active voice should be used in sentences.
- 3) Sentences should be short and unambiguous.
- 4) Any text copied from another document shall be fully referenced in a footnote. The name of the referenced document shall be in italics.
- 5) As ANSI states: “The correct verb form for indicating a requirement is “shall.” The correct verb form for indicating a recommendation is “should”. Universally accepted “standardese” does not recognize “must”. Use “shall” for indicating a mandatory aspect or an aspect on which there is

¹ The *ANSI Style Guide-Sheet-2003* is available by request from ANSI, 25 West 43rd Street, 4th floor New York, NY 10036. www.ansi.org.

² *How to Write Standards* is available for free at www.iso.org/iso/how-to-write-standards.pdf

³ *Recommended Practice for the Designation and Organization of Standards, ANSI/SES 1:2013* is available for a fee at www.ses-standards.org

no option.⁴ Negative forms are “shall not” and “should not”. “May” and “need not” indicate a course of action that is permissible.

- 6) Since the documents will be available electronically, cross-references within the document shall be hyperlinked. External hyperlinks are also permissible.
- 7) As ANSI states: “Make sure all standards on which the document is contingent are fully and correctly listed, with availability footnotes, where necessary. Any document cited in the standard as being indispensable for the application of the standard needs to be listed in Normative References. Informative references - those for information only, or for use as background reading - are to be listed in a Bibliography.”⁴
- 8) The document should have consistent use of terms. For example, the editor should ensure that either ‘palm print’ or ‘palmprint’ is used throughout the document.
- 9) Acronyms shall be defined at first use and shall appear in the section of the document “Terms and Definitions” (See Section 3.8).
- 10) Sections of the main body of the standard shall be designated by a number. Subsections of the main body of the standard shall be designated by a number, period, and another number, repeating as necessary to indicate the level of the subsection. (Examples are 3. and 3.1 and 3.1.8) Annexes shall be designated by letters and annex sections and subsections shall be designated by that letter followed by a period and a sequence of numbers and periods designating the level(s) of the subsection. (Examples are A.2 and A.2.5 and A.5.7.3)

3 Document Layout for Standards

3.1 General

This section describes the general format that is used for ASB standards. Deviations from this layout are possible, but need prior approval of the Secretariat.

3.2 Cover Page

The cover page shall contain the ASB numerical designation for the standard in the upper right corner. The Title shall be centered on the line below the ASB numerical designation.

The ANSI logo shall not appear on the draft copies of the standard, but shall be added after approval of the standard by both ASB and ANSI.

3.3 Title Page

The title page immediately follows the cover page. Like the cover page, it contains the ASB numerical designation of the standard on the upper right corner of the page and the centered title below it.

This is followed by the ASB and ANSI (if an ANS) approval dates.

⁴ The *ANSI Style Guide-Sheet-2003* is available by request from ANSI, 25 West 43rd Street, 4th floor New York, NY 10036. www.ansi.org.

The ASB logo, printed name and address shall be on the title page.

The following shall appear: “This document may be downloaded for free at: <http://asb.aafs.org/>.”

The copyright statement in Section B.3 shall also appear on the Title page.

3.4 Foreword

The Foreword should generally describe the document and how it originated.

The Foreword may also include the scientific and/or operational underpinnings for the requirements laid out in the standard or best practice recommendation. When writing this section, the authors should keep in mind that this need not be a full scientific treatise, but rather a general overview of the principles.

Each revision of the standard shall include a summary of the substantive changes to the previous edition.

Keywords shall appear at the bottom of the page.

3.5 Table of Contents

The Table of Contents shall include all of the section headers, annexes, figures, and tables. Each entry shall include the page number. It is recommended that this be automatically generated by the word processor.

3.6 Scope (Section 1)

The Scope begins with a paragraph describing in general terms the types of applications targeted by the standard. As appropriate the scope also indicates what processes or applications are not covered. The paragraph may define the target audience.

The Scope is intended to be brief and concise and shall be identical to the Scope submitted in the New Work Proposal.

3.7 Normative References (Section 2)

Normative references are documents that are **indispensable** for the application of the standard. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies. Normative references shall be cited at least once in the body of the standard.

The list shall be in alphabetical order of the designation (e.g., ANSI/INCITS 398) or name of the producing organization or author, if there is no standard designation (e.g., American Board of Forensic Odontology). Immediately following is the name of the document in italics. Information about how to obtain a copy of the document should be included, if known.

Sample entries are:

American Board of Forensic Odontology, *Diplomates Reference Manual*. It is available at <http://www.abfo.org/resources/abfo-manual/>

ANSI/NIST-ITL 1-2011 Update: 2015, NIST Special Publication 500-271 V3, *Data Format for the Interchange of Fingerprint, Facial and Other Biometric Information*. It is available at http://www.nist.gov/itl/iad/ig/ansi_standard.cfm

3.8 Terms and Definitions (Section 3)

Any acronyms or specialized terminology used in the body of the standard shall be listed in this section. They shall be numbered and in alphabetical order, with special characters appearing first. If specialized terminology is used in a definition, that terminology shall have a definition in this section and the term shall be in bold letters.

For purposes of this document, the following definitions and acronyms apply.

3.9.1

Best Practice Recommendation

BPR

A best practice is a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means or because it has become a commonly preferred way of doing things, e.g., a preferred way of complying with legal or ethical requirements. ASB BPRs are developed with the same consensus process as ASB Standards.

3.9.2

can

Used for statements of possibility or capability (see Annex A for additional information).

3.9.3

conditional

Element the presence of which in a document is dependent on the provisions of the particular document.

3.9.4

informative

Element that identifies the document, introduces its content and explains its background, its development, and its relationship with other documents.

Element that provides additional information intended to assist the understanding or use of the document.

3.9.5

mandatory

Element the presence of which in a document is obligatory.

3.9.6

may

Used to indicate that a provision is optional (see Annex A for additional information).

3.9.7

need not

Used to indicate that a provision is not required (see Annex A for additional information).

3.9.8

normative

Element that is required for the implementation of the document.

3.9.9

optional

Element that is not required for the implementation of the document.

3.9.10

recommendation

Expression in the content of a document conveying that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited

3.9.11

requirement

Expression in the content of a document conveying criteria to be fulfilled if compliance with the document is to be claimed and from which no deviation is permitted.

3.9.12

shall

Used to indicate that a provision is mandatory (see Annex A for additional information).

3.9.13

should

Used to indicate that a provision is not mandatory, but recommended as good practice (see Annex A for additional information).

3.9.14

Standard

Std

Document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines, or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

3.9.15

Technical Report

TR

A TR differs from a standard in that it does not set requirements, it is an explanatory or informational document. A TR may be used to describe the scientific and operational underpinnings of a standard, or to explore industry areas that are still undergoing research, or be a terms and definitions document.

3.9.16

statement

Expression in the content of a document conveying information.

4 Requirements Section of the Standard

This is the ‘core’ of the standard. The exact layout and title of the requirements will vary by standard, depending upon the topic being addressed. There may be several sections or subsections in the document addressing the requirements. There may also be sections following the Requirements, such as Equipment, or Safety.

The contents should be organized in a coherent, topic-oriented manner. All requirements relating to a process, procedure, analysis, etc., should be grouped together. It is possible to have various configurations of ‘should’, ‘shall’, ‘may’, ‘should not’, ‘shall not’ and ‘need not’ statements.

5 Annexes

Annexes contain supplemental information and shall be labeled as ‘normative’ or ‘informative’. An example of an informative annex could be a description of particular case examples, to illustrate how the principles of the document were applied. An example of a normative annex, for example, could be detailed information concerning the setup of particular equipment necessary to perform the tasks contained in the requirements section. Each annex shall be referenced in the body of the document.

A Bibliography is required for all documents with any informatively referenced documents. All references included in the text shall be listed in the bibliography or in Section 2 – Normative References. Normative references are required for implementation of the Standard.

The format of references follows the format of the Modern Language Association (MLA). See <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/24/>

6 Figures and Tables

Figures and tables shall be called out in the document and should be located as close to the callout as possible. Figures and tables shall be designated “Table” or “Figure” and numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals, beginning with 1 (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, Figure 1, Figure 2).

Figure and tables included in annexes shall include the identifying letter of the annex in which they appear (e.g., Figure A.1, Table B.1).

Annex A (informative)

Expression of Provisions

A.1 Requirements

Table A.1 summarizes the verbal forms of expression that shall be used to indicate requirements to be followed in order to conform to the document and from which no deviation is permitted.

Table A.1—Verbal Forms to Express Requirements

Verbal Form	Equivalent Expressions for Use in Exceptional Cases ^a
shall ^b	is to is required to it is required that has to only...is permitted it is necessary
shall not	is not allowed (permitted) (acceptable) (permissible) is required to be not is required that...be not is not to be
NOTE 1 Do not use “may” when “can” is meant. NOTE 2 Do not use “may not” when “shall not” is meant. NOTE 3 See ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, Annex G for negatives of these verbal forms and further explanation.	
^a The equivalent expressions given the second column shall be used only in exceptional cases when the form given in the first column cannot be used for linguistic reasons. ^b Do not use “must” as an alternative for “shall” (this will avoid any confusion between the requirements of a document and jurisdictional regulatory obligations).	

Avoid using vague expressions that are not truly informative and might cause the reader to make an incorrect judgment call. Words like “very,” “all,” “every,” “never,” “excessive,” “slightly,” “approximately,” “nearly,” or “significant” are not useful.

A.2 Recommendations

Table A.2 summarizes the verbal forms that shall be used to indicate:

- a) that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding the others;
- b) or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required;
- c) or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action is discouraged but not prohibited.

Table A.2—Verbal Forms to Express Recommendations

Verbal Form	Equivalent Expressions for Use in Exceptional Cases^a
should	it is recommended that ought to
should not	it is not recommended that ought not to
^a The equivalent expressions given the second column shall be used only in exceptional cases when the form given in the first column cannot be used for linguistic reasons.	

A.3 Permission

Table A.3 summarizes the verbal forms that shall be used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

Table A.3—Verbal Forms to Express Permission

Verbal Form	Equivalent Expressions for Use in Exceptional Cases^a
may	is permitted to is allowed is permissible
need not	it is not required that no...is required
Do not use “possible” or “impossible” in this context. Do not use “can” instead of “may” in this context.	
NOTE “May” signifies permission expressed by the document, whereas “can” refers to the ability of a user of the document or to a possibility open to him/her.	
^a The equivalent expressions given the second column shall be used only in exceptional cases when the form given in the first column cannot be used for linguistic reasons.	

A.4 Possibility and Capability

Table A.4 summarizes the verbal forms that shall be used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical, or causal.

Table A.4—Verbal Forms to Express Possibility and Capability

Verbal Form	Equivalent Expressions for Use in Exceptional Cases^a
can	be able to there is a possibility of it is possible to
cannot	be unable to there is no possibility of it is not possible to
NOTE See Note in Table A.3.	
^a The equivalent expressions given the second column shall be used only in exceptional cases when the form given in the first column cannot be used for linguistic reasons.	

Annex B (informative)

Patents and Copyrights

B.1 General

Participants shall not provide any documents, data, or information if the use of such material by the ASB in a document would infringe upon the rights of any third parties in the information including, but not limited to, copyrights, patents, trade secrets, trademarks, publicity, and privacy. Participants shall notify ASB staff if a participant determines that any information that is contained in a final or draft document would violate the rights of third parties if published by the ASB.

B.2 Patents

The ASB complies with the Patent Policy in the *ANSI Essential Requirements-2016*. The subsections of Section B.2 are modified from this document to refer specifically to the ASB.

B.2.1 Inclusion of Patents in American National Standards

There is no objection in principle to drafting an American National Standard (ANS) in terms that include the use of an essential patent claim (one whose use would be required for compliance with that standard) if it is considered that technical reasons justify this approach.

Participants in ANSI/ASB standards development process are encouraged to bring patents with claims believed to be essential to the attention of the ASB.

If ASB receives a notice that a proposed ANS or an approved ANS may require the use of such a patent claim, the following procedures shall be followed.

B.2.2 Statement from patent holder

The ASB shall receive from the patent holder or a party authorized to make assurances on its behalf, in written or electronic form, either:

- a) assurance in the form of a general disclaimer to the effect that such party does not hold and does not currently intend holding any essential patent claim(s); or
- b) assurance that a license to such essential patent claim(s) will be made available to applicants desiring to utilize the license for the purpose of implementing the standard either:
 - i) under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination; or
 - ii) without compensation and under reasonable terms and conditions that are demonstrably free of any unfair discrimination.

Such assurance shall indicate that the patent holder (or third party authorized to make assurances on its behalf) will include in any documents transferring ownership of patents

subject to the assurance, provisions sufficient to ensure that the commitments in the assurance are binding on the transferee, and that the transferee will similarly include appropriate provisions in the event of future transfers with the goal of binding each successor-in-interest.

The assurance shall also indicate that it is intended to be binding on successors-in-interest regardless of whether such provisions are included in the relevant transfer documents.

B.2.3 Record of statement

A record of the patent holder's statement shall be retained in the files of both the ASB and ANSI.

B.2.3 Notice

When the ASB receives from a patent holder the assurance set forth in B.2.2.b above, the standard shall include a note substantially as follows:

NOTE – The user's attention is called to the possibility that compliance with this standard may require use of an invention covered by patent rights.

By publication of this standard, no position is taken with respect to the validity of any such claim(s) or of any patent rights in connection therewith. If a patent holder has filed a statement of willingness to grant a license under these rights on reasonable and nondiscriminatory terms and conditions to applicants desiring to obtain such a license, then details may be obtained from the standards developer.

3.1.4 Responsibility for identifying patents

Neither the ASB nor ANSI is responsible for identifying patents for which a license may be required by an American National Standard or for conducting inquiries into the legal validity or scope of those patents that are brought to their attention.

B.3 Copyrights

All ASB documents are protected by a variety of federal and state copyright laws, the following disclaimer shall appear on all ASB published and draft documents:

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Certain commercial entities, equipment or materials may be identified in this document to describe a procedure or concept adequately. Such identification is not intended to imply recommendations or endorsement by the AAFS or the AAFS Standards Board, nor is it intended to imply that the entities, materials, or equipment are necessarily the best available for the purpose.

The following statement shall appear at the bottom of the Cover page and the Title page:

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Unless expressly agreed otherwise by the ASB, all material and information that is provided by participants and is incorporated into an ASB document is considered the sole and exclusive property of the AAFS Standards Board.

Individuals shall not copy or distribute draft documents without the authorization of the ASB staff.

Annex C (informative)

Numbers, Units of Measurement, and Equations

C.1 Use of Numbers

The following are general guidelines for the use of numbers in text.

- Spell out numbers that are less than 10, not precise measurements, and not grouped with numbers over 10 (eight trials, First Edition).
- Use numerals for numbers 10 and above, or numbers under 10 grouped with numbers 10 and above (e.g., from 6 to 12 cups of water, 20th Edition).
- Use numerals for exact statistical measures, scores, sample sizes, and sums (multiplied by 3, or 5% of the sample).
- Use combinations of written and Arabic numerals for back-to-back numbers (five 4-point scales).
- Use combinations of numerals and written numbers for large sums (over 6 million people).
- Use a comma in numbers that are $\geq 10,000$ (7000 items, 11,200 units).
- Use the percent symbol (%) only with figures (6%), not with written numbers (six percent).
- Do not use periods within measurements (lb, ft, s) except inches (in.).

C.2 Units of Measurement

In recognition of broad use and applicability of ASB standards, measured and calculated values may be expressed in metric units (SI) and U.S. customary units (USC). When citing units in dual units, either unit may be listed first with the corresponding unit listed either in parentheses in the text or on separate, tables, figures, datasheets or in separate annexes. Units shall be listed consistently within a document.

C.3 Equations

Equations should be numbered when two or more are included in the main text of the document. Designate equations with consecutive Arabic numbers beginning with 1. Number each equation in the order that it appears in the standard, regardless of the section number in which it is referenced. Designate equations in annexes by the designation of the annex followed by consecutive numbers beginning with 1 (for example, A.1, B.4).

The format for a numbered equation is:

$$S = \frac{Mc}{I} \tag{1}$$

where:

S = stress, psi or Pa,

M = bending moment, lbf•in. or N•m,

c = distance from neutral axis to outermost fiber, in., or m, and

I = second moment of area, in.⁴ or m⁴.

Annex D (informative)

Sample Format for an ASB Document

1 Scope

This manual was developed to provide guidance for preparing documents that will be published by the AAFS Standards Board (ASB) and potentially submitted to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

2 Normative References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

*ANSI Style Guide-Sheet-2003*⁵

How to Write Standards, International Organization for Standardization (ISO)⁶

ANSI/SES 1:2013, *Recommended Practice for the Designation and Organization of Standards*, The Society for Standards Professionals (SES)⁷

3 Terms and Definitions

For purposes of this document, the following definitions and acronyms apply.

3.1

term

Definition.

3.2

term

acronym

Definition.

4 Level 1 Heading [Cambria font, 12 pt, bold, 12 pt space below]

4.1 Level 2 additional Heading [Cambria font, 11 pt, bold, 12 pt space below]

Document text [Cambria font, 11 pt, 12 pt space below].

⁵

The *ANSI Style Guide-Sheet-2003* is available by request from ANSI, 25 West 43rd Street, 4th floor New York, NY 10036. www.ansi.org.

⁶ *How to Write Standards* is available for free at www.iso.org/iso/how-to-write-standards.pdf

⁷ ANSI/SES 1:2013, *Recommended Practice for the Designation and Organization of Standards* is available for a fee at www.ses-standards.org

- a) First level of lists are alphabetical, consistent font with text leading into the list.
- b) Lists are also separated by a 12 pt space below each item.
 - i) Second level of lists are Roman numerals, font and spacing consistent with the lead-in list.

NOTE [Cambria font, 10 pt]

EXAMPLE [Cambria font, 11 pt].

CAUTION [Cambria font, 11 pt, bold].

5 Tables

Tables shall be called out in the text, and shall be numbered sequentially through the document. Tables in annexes shall be numbered sequentially through each annex with the annex letter as the prefix to the table number.

Table 1 – Table Title [Cambria font, 11 pt, bold, centered, above the table]

Table Header Row	[Cambria font, 10 pt, bold]
Table content	[Cambria font, 10 pt, centered if appropriate, all table content has 2 pt above and below]
Table notes or footnotes [Cambria font, 9 pt]	

6 Figures

Figures shall be called out in the text, and shall be numbered sequentially through the document. Figures in annexes shall be numbered sequentially through each annex with the annex letter as the prefix to the figure number.



Figure 1 – Figure Title [Cambria font, 11 pt, bold, centered, below the figure]

7 Annexes

Annexes shall always start at the top of a new page and shall be called out in the main body of the document.

Annex X

[Cambria font, 14 pt, bold, centered, no space below]

(informative or normative)

[Cambria font, 14 pt, centered, 12 pt below]

Annex Title

[Cambria font, 14 pt, bold, centered, 12 pt below]

X.1 Level 1 Annex Header [Cambria font, 12 pt, bold, 12 pt below]

X.1.2 Level 2 Annex additional Heading [Cambria font, 11 pt, bold, 12 pt space below]

Annex text [Cambria font, 11 pt, 12 pt space below].

8 Bibliography

The last annex contains the Bibliography. The Bibliography shall be informative (i.e., the documents listed are not included in Section 2, Normative References, of the Standard).

Annex E (informative)

Bibliography

The format of references follows the format of the Modern Language Association (MLA). See <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/24/>

- 1] ASTM International, *Form and Style for ASTM Standards*, January 2015 ⁸
- 2] IEEE Standards Association, *2014 IEEE-SA Standards Style Manual* ⁹
- 3] ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, *Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*, 2011 ¹⁰
- 4] NFPA, *Manual of Style for NFPA Technical Committee Documents*, July 2004 ¹¹

For references to articles, the following format shall be used:

- 1] Organization name, *Standard or book title*, Month (if available) year.
- 2] Last name, First name. *Article title*. Journal title, year.
- 3] Last name, First name. *Book title*. Publisher, year.
- 4] Last name, First name and Last name, First name. *Article title*. Journal title, year.

For example:

- 5] ASTM International, *Form and Style for ASTM Standards*, January 2015
- 6] Ames, Daniel T. *Ames on Forgery Its Detection and Illustration*. Bancroft-Whitney Co. San Francisco, 1899.
- 7] Cole, Alwyn. *Definition and Scope of Work of the Examiner of Questioned Documents, Document Examiner, or Document Analyst in Technical Abstracts and Notes*. Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science, 1969.
- 8] Kelly, Jan Seaman and Lindblom, Brian L. *Eds. Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents*. 2nd Ed. CRC Press, 2006.

⁸ ASTM International, 100 Barr Harbor Drive, PO Box C700, West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959

⁹ IEEE, 3 Park Avenue, 17th Floor, New York, NY, 10016-5997

¹⁰ International Organization for Standardization, 1, ch. de la Voie-Creuse, Case postale 56, CH-1211 Geneva 20

¹¹ National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471



Academy Standards Board
410 North 21st Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

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