Standard Operating Procedure for the Voting Process for Acceptance of New Language Submitted to NELAC

NELAC Language Review Committee
Date: June 23, 2004
DRAFT EXAMPLE - DO NOT QUOTE OR CITE

Concurrences:

Originator: _____

Chairperson, NELAC Standards Review Committee:_____

NELAC Director: _____

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Voting Process 001
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1. Purpose:

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline the process used to vote on proposed language submitted to the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Standards Review Committee (SRC).

2. Applicability:

This SOP applies to the voting process used by the NELAC SRC to determine if language submitted by a Standard Development Organizations (SDOs) as defined in the "Criteria for Approving Standard Development Organizations" SOP will be presented to NELAC for a vote.

3. Summary:

A SDO presents proposed language to the SRC chairperson. The proposed language goes through a successful Completeness Review and a Technical Review. The SRC chairperson presents the proposed language to the SRC as an agenda item. A simple majority is required to move the proposed language to a full quorum vote. A final version is presented for comment and vote at a subsequent scheduled meeting. A vote is taken by roll call of those in attendance. Absent SRC members have two weeks to vote by an official ballot provided by the SRC chairperson. All votes regarding the final consideration of proposed language requires a full quorum of the SRC membership for the vote to be considered valid and official.

4. Definitions:

4.1 Simple Majority

A simple majority is defined as greater than 50% of the SRC Membership. For example, if the SRC consists of 22 members, a simple majority is defined as 12 or more members. Simple majority requirements do not incorporate vacant positions into the requirements calculations unless the number of vacant positions exceeds 20% of the SRC membership. If the number of vacancies exceeds 20%, the vacant positions must be filled, or the size of the SRC must be formally changed by the NELAC before the SRC is allowed to vote.

4.2 Full Quorum

A full quorum is defined as a minimum of 90% of the SRC membership. Full quorum requirements do not incorporate vacant positions into the requirements calculations unless the number of vacant positions exceeds 20% of the SRC membership. If the number of vacancies exceeds 20%, the vacant positions must be filled, or the size of the SRC must be formally changed by the NELAC before the SRC is allowed to vote.

4.3 Meeting

A meeting is defined as coming together of the SRC. A meeting may be a physical gathering, conference call, or other electronic means that allows for free, timely exchange of ideas.

4.4 Negative Vote

A negative vote is defined as an "Against".

5. Procedure:

5.1 Receiving Proposed Language

A SDO presents proposed language to the SRC chairperson. The proposed language goes through a successful Completeness Review and a Technical Review. The SRC Chairperson presents the proposed language to the SRC as an agenda item.

5.2 Review and Action

The SRC will discuss the best course of action for the proposed language and recommendation from the Technical Review. A simple majority of the SRC will move the proposed language back to Technical Review for additional action or forward to a full quorum vote.

5.3 Discussion and Comment

At a subsequent meeting, the SRC discusses the proposed language, hears recommendations from the Technical Review and makes comments. Discussion will continue until a simple majority determines that the recommendation language is ready for a full quorum vote.

5.4 Full Quorum Vote

At a subsequent meeting, the recommendation to send the proposed language forward to the NELAC or return to the SDO is presented for final comment and full quorum vote.

SRC members who are absent, during the meeting in which a full quorum vote is made, have two weeks to place a vote electronically, by FAX, or hard copy on an official ballot provided by the SRC chairperson. Electronic votes must contain the electronic signature of the SRC member. A decision by a simple majority is required to initiate the full quorum vote. The vote is not considered valid unless a full quorum has been met within the designated two week period. If a full quorum fails to vote within the two-week period, the vote is considered invalid and the issue must be presented again for vote according to the process that begins with Section 5.1.

5.5 Voting Options Full Quorum

5.5.1 The voting options available to the SRC are “For”, “Against”, “Abstain”. If no vote is received, it is recorded as “Absent”.

5.5.2 If an SRC member is a representative of a National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) accrediting authority (AA), that member must vote either “For” or “Against”.

5.6 Voting Requirements for presentation to the NELAC.

5.6.1 A passing vote must come from a full quorum. A passing vote requires a two-thirds majority of the full quorum to vote “For”.

5.6.2 If any NELAP AA votes “Against” a submission it shall be considered to be a failed vote regardless of the vote of the SRC as a whole and may not be presented to the NELAC with a recommendation to adopt.

5.6.3 Proxy voting is not allowed, however, committee members representing a NELAP AA, with prior approval of the committee chairperson, may designate alternates. The affected SRC member(s) must provide a minimum of one day’s notice to the committee chairperson to accept alternates. Non-AA voting members may not provide alternates for voting purposes.

5.7 Recording of the Full Quorum Vote

The vote of the SRC is recorded on a member-by-member basis and the tally attached to the final version of the language. The SRC chairperson must confirm and document that a full quorum was met at the time of completion of the vote.

5.8 Negative Votes

5.8.1 Negative votes must be addressed before submitting a proposed standard to the NELAC. Each of the following steps must be taken in order:

5.8.1.1 Further discussion of proposed standard shall be conducted;

5.8.1.2 Those SRC members casting a negative vote shall present language that will correct the reason(s) for their negative vote(s);

5.8.1.3 The SRC shall obtain additional information from the SDO to further explain the rationale for to proposed language; and

5.8.1.4 The SRC shall return the proposed standard to the SDO with recommendation to mitigate or eliminate the area of disagreement.

6. Quality Control:

The NELAC Board of Directors and the NELAP Director will assess the performance of the SRC review process annually.

7. References:

NELAC Constitution and Bylaws approved June 2003.

Chapter 1 NELAC Standards approved June 2003.