**ASHRAE**

**Guide to Writing Standards in Mandatory Language**

**Version 2**

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

ASHRAE Rules of the Board include this rule:

*“1.201.004.5 All standards shall be written in definitive mandatory language.”*

The Procedures for ASHRAE Standards Actions (PASA) defines mandatory language as:

***“mandatory language:*** *language that prescribes the requirements of a standard in a manner that is clear and unambiguous. It provides a basis for determining, without a doubt, whether or not compliance with the standard has been achieved. It is often characterized by the use of “shall” or “must.”*

The nature of writing standards in mandatory language is difficult, but very clear cut: standards either comply with ASHRAE’s mandatory language requirement or they are not compliant; anything other than complete compliance is non-compliant.

This mandatory language guide provides standard project committees with information and tools for writing standards and addenda. For project committees involved with ASHRAE standards that are expected to be adopted by reference into a code, rule or regulation governing buildings and their systems, a companion guide, *“ASHRAE Guide for Writing Standards in Code-Intended Language”* provides additional information on how to comply with the ASHRAE Rules of the Board regarding Code-Intended Language.

1. **GUIDANCE FOR WRITING STANDARDS IN MANDATORY LANGUAGE**

**2.1 Responsibilities**

**2.1.1 Standard Project Committees.** Each standard project committee (SPC) and standing standard project committee (SSPC) must review its draft standard or addendum to identify the use of non-mandatory language, following the steps outlined in Section 2.2.1, before submitting the draft for publication public review approval. If the SPC/SSPC is unable to make corrective revisions to eliminate non-mandatory language, the SPC/SSPC is encouraged to request assistance from ASHRAE staff to assist with the development of revisions to meet the mandatory language requirement.

**2.1.2 Standards Project Liaison Subcommittee (SPLS)**. SPLS, with support from ASHRAE Staff, (a) will review public review standards and addenda to identify any ambiguous, unclear, or incomplete (non-mandatory) language in normative portions, and (b) will assist the project committee (PC) Chair with revisions that will result in compliance with the mandatory language requirement prior to approval for publication public review.

**2.2 Project Committee Steps for Complying with ASHRAE’s Mandatory Language Requirements**

**2.2.1 Permissive Words and Phrases.** The permissive words and phrases that are listed in Table 1 are not allowed in the normative sections of ASHRAE standards. ASHRAE has developed a macro that can be used by authors, reviewers, commenters, and approvers of an ASHRAE standard to quickly determine if any of the words and phrases listed in Table 1 appears in a standard. See Informative Annex A for more information.

**Table 1.Prohibited Words and Phrases in Normative Sections**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| acceptable | adequate(ly) | advise | also |
| and/or | and the like | appreciable | approximate(ly) |
| aspire | available | avoid (ed) | can |
| care | careful(ly) | consider (ed) (ation) | could |
| chance (on the chance) | desire (ed) (able) | easy(ily) | effectively |
| e.g. | encourage | ensure | equivalent(ly) |
| etc. | exception | excess(ive) | familiar |
| feasible | few | firm(ly) | frequent(ly) |
| general(ly) | good | grant | guide(line) |
| i.e. | imply | infer | in lieu of |
| insure | it(s) | legible (ly) | light(ly) |
| like(ly) | many | may | maybe |
| might | most(ly) | near(ly) | neat(ly) |
| no | note | ought / ought to | normal(ly) |
| periodic(ally) | possible | practice | practical(ly) |
| preferred | presume | Probable(ly) | properly |
| ready (ily) | reasonable (ly) | recommend(ation) | request |
| safe(ly) | satisfactory | secure(ly) | several |
| should | significant (ly) | similar | some |
| substantial (ly) | sufficient(ly) | suitable | suggest (tion) |
| they | them | typical(ly) | which |
| would | urge | usual(ly) | via |
| vice versa |  |  |  |

**2.2.2 Informative Information in Normative Sections**. Informative notes in normative sections of a standard are used to provide the user, or point the user to, additional information that may be helpful. PASA Normative Annex A defines informative notes as:

***informative notes:*** *explanatory information, appearing in a standard, that does not contain requirements or any information considered indispensable for the use of the standard. Informative notes are to begin with the words “(Informative Note(s))” and be placed after the section of the standard to which the note applies. If the informative note is more than two sentences, the information shall be placed in an informative annex and referred to by the informative note. Where there is more than one informative note, the notes must be numbered sequentially.*

**INFORMATIVE ANNEX A**

**ASHRAE’S MANDATORY LANGUAGE MACRO**

ASHRAE Staff developed a macro that can be used to simultaneously locate and highlight all words and phrases shown in Table 1. The macro is designed to be used with working drafts written in Microsoft Word. To use the macro, open it and then copy and paste the working draft at the end of the macro instructions, and then follow the instructions shown below. The macro can be obtained the PC Chair’s Toolkit at \_\_(To be Added)\_\_\_\_\_.