

On February 17, the ANSI Z535 committee on Safety Signs and Colors held its first meeting in five years. The meeting established new directions and new leadership for the committee.

New leadership selected

Long-time chair, Geoffrey Peckham, and vice-chair, Paul Frantz, chose to step down from their positions after eight years of service. To fill these roles, NEMA Secretary Paul Orr nominated Steven Hall as chair and Judi Isaacson as vice-chair, who were confirmed by ballot in advance of the meeting.

Subcommittee leadership is also changing due to retirements and vacancies. New chairs will be nominated and confirmed by letter ballot for Z535.1, Z535.4, Z535.6, and a new subcommittee on electronic media.

New editions of standards expected in 2022

The next editions of the standards are expected to be published in 2022. Change proposals must be submitted by June 30, 2020.



Steven M. Hall, Chair

Senior Consultant, Applied Safety + Ergonomics

Mr. Hall has participated in the Z535 committee for almost 20 years. He was instrumental in the creation of Z535.6, has led the Z535.4 subcommittee, is part of the ISO/TC 145 U.S. TAG, and has been involved in efforts to consider how to address electronic media in the standards.



Judith J. Isaacson, Vice-Chair

Managing Consultant, Applied Safety + Ergonomics

Ms. Isaacson has been a long-time contributor to the Z535 committee. She chairs the U.S. TAG to ISO/TC 145, is co-convener of TC 145 SC2 WG1, and has participated in numerous international meetings in that capacity. She has also served as vice-chair of the Z535.6 subcommittee.

Wordless safety labels

The committee has long grappled with how to deal with issues of translation for safety signs and labels for audiences including readers of different languages. The standards have allowed for safety symbols to replace part or all of a word message, helping to solve this translation issue. However, the standards have not allowed completely wordless formats, as a signal word was still required for safety signs and labels. As an alternative, ANSI Z535.4 referred readers to ISO 3864-2, which permits completely wordless formats.

At the meeting the committee discussed whether to permit completely wordless signs and labels and, if so, what form they should take. Some members expressed the need for wordless safety labels to communicate across language barriers and to facilitate distribution internationally. Others discussed concerns about omitting signal words.

The committee also discussed adding a new concept to Z535.3: graphics indicating proper versus improper actions using green checks and red Xs.

Change proposals on both topics are expected to be submitted for consideration for the next editions of the standards.

New standard for safety information in electronic media

In follow up to the work presented by the Electronic Media working groups at the last several meetings, the committee approved a proposal to form a new subcommittee to develop a standard addressing safety information in electronic media. The scope of this standard is expected to include video materials, web pages, smartphone and tablet applications, augmented and virtual reality, etc. The timeline for publication has not yet been established.

Chemical labeling

Raina Shah presented a proposal to explicitly exclude chemical labeling from ANSI Z535.4. The proposal was intended to clarify the applicability of the standard where federal and state regulations (e.g., CPSC, EPA, OSHA, California Proposition 65) specify particular labeling. Based on discussion and feedback from the committee, Ms. Shah is expected to submit a revised proposal for consideration for the next edition of the standard.