

What is ISO?

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO), one of the largest voluntary groups for industrial and technical cooperation, is a non-governmental organization bringing together the interests of producers and users in the preparation of international voluntary consensus standards. Its work covers virtually every area of technology, with the exception of electrotechnical.

What is ISO/TC 188/SC 1?

The standards development work of ISO is accomplished through technical committees (TCs) and subcommittees (SCs). Until recently, PFDs and immersion suits were addressed by a working group convened under TC 188, the ISO Technical Committee on Small Craft. In April 2010, the working group was disbanded and a new subcommittee, SC 1 on Personal Protective Equipment, was established to cover this work area.

What is the TAG?

The U.S. participates in the ISO standards development process via the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The national consensus position on ISO agenda items is determined by the ANSI-accredited Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the appropriate TC or SC. The TAG for ISO/T 188/SC 1 is made up of representatives from PFD and component manufacturers, government/regulatory bodies, testing/standards organizations, consumers, and industry/trade associations.

What is involved in TAG membership?

Each TAG member is expected to actively participate in TAG activities. This includes voting and commenting on ISO draft standards, voting or commenting on TAG Administrative matters, and participating in TAG meetings.

When/where does the TAG meet?

The TAG meets as often as necessary to conduct business, but not less than once per year. TAG meetings may be conducted via teleconference or webinar. Due to the large overlap with the UL Standards Technical Panel (STP), face to face meetings are typically held in conjunction with STP meetings at UL in Research Triangle Park, NC. However, TAG members who are unable to travel may participate by phone.

Do TAG members attend ISO meetings?

The US/ANSI delegation to ISO meetings is selected by the TAG and accredited by ANSI on a meeting by meeting basis. Delegates are typically selected from the TAG membership, but may be non-members, depending on the topics to be discussed.

Which standards fall under the new SC (and TAG)?

ISO/TC 188/SC 1 is responsible for the following standards:

- ISO 10862: Quick release system for trapeze harness
- ISO 12401 (series): Deck safety harness and safety line
- ISO 12402 (series): Personal flotation devices
- ISO 15027 (series): Immersion suits

Does the US recognize these standards?

At present, the ISO standards are not used in the US for certification of lifesaving equipment. However, there is an ongoing effort to develop standards for consolidated North American approval of PFDs using the ISO 12402 series standards. The harmonized standard is expected to be published in Spring of 2012.

Why is TAG membership important?

Each TAG member represents a segment of the PFD/Immersion Suit community and has direct influence over the international standards that apply to these devices.

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in participating in the TAG, contact the TAG Chair, Brandi Baldwin, at brandi.a.baldwin@uscg.mil, or the AG Administrator Helen Koepper at hkoepper@abycinc.org.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about ISO standards development activities, visit: http://www.iso.org/iso/standards_development.htm.

For more information about how ANSI interacts with ISO, visit: http://ansi.org/standards_activities/iso_programs/overview.aspx?menuid=3.

For more information about the North American efforts to harmonize PFD approvals with ISO standards, visit: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg5214/namericanstand.asp>.

If you have questions not addressed, contact the TAG Chair, Brandi Baldwin, at brandi.a.baldwin@uscg.mil.