



US Standards Group On QEDS

INFORMATION SHEET

Web Site Address: <http://standardsgroup.asq.org>

TC 56 – IEC DEPENDABILITY STANDARDS FAQs

What is Dependability?

Dependability is defined by the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) as:

The collective term used to describe the availability performance and its influencing factors: reliability performance, maintainability performance and maintainability support performance.

Note. – Dependability is used only for general descriptions in non-quantitative terms.

This is definition 191-02-03 in the document “IEC 60050-191 International Electrotechnical Vocabulary. Chapter 191: Dependability and quality of service”. Essentially this definition encompasses Reliability, Maintainability and Serviceability, the RMS “-ilities”, which, in the U.S. are commonly covered separately.

What is the IEC?

The IEC is the world’s oldest international standards organization having been established in 1906. It is the international standardization agency for the fields of electricity, electronics and related technologies. By agreement with ISO, the other major international standards organization, IEC has responsibility for developing Dependability standards while ISO, has responsibility for Quality related standards. Both organizations cooperate closely; in fact they are headquartered in the same building in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 100 countries are members of the IEC. Each country participates through its National Committee. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) represents the US NC.

It is important to understand that voting rules have been established and each country participating has one vote.

What is TC 56?

TC 56 is the IEC Technical Committee (TC) charged with developing and maintaining Dependability standards and related documents. The US is one of 23 countries engaged in TC 56 work. TC 56 has a Chairman, appointed by the IEC, and a Secretariat to perform the administrative tasks. The British Standards Institute is the present Secretariat for TC 56. All input to the TC 56 Secretariat is through the US National Committee (NC), which is represented by ANSI.

How are Dependability Standards developed?

Each country participates in TC 56 through a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which is chaired by a Technical Advisor (TA). The US TAG is supported by the ASQ who acts as Administrator. The TAG is expected to participate by recruiting experts, taking part in document development and review and by attending TC 56 and TAG meetings in the US and internationally. Although there is now almost total reliance on the Internet for dissemination of documents and collection of commentary there is still a need to participate in project meetings, which frequently are overseas.

What Dependability Standards are available and how are they obtained?

Over 30 Dependability Standards and Application guides have been published by the IEC. They are organized in four levels.

1. The top level (-1) documents deal with Dependability Management
2. The second level (-2) provide guidance on program elements and tasks
3. The third level (-3) consists of series of application guides to aid the user

4. The fourth level is a series of stand-alone tools, which define some procedure or statistical technique.

All the documents are listed on the IEC Web site (www.iec.ch) under Technical Committee 56. A brief description of each document is available by selecting the Document title, which is in HTML. It is also possible to learn about TC 56 Work in progress and the membership of the Working Groups and Project Groups. Instructions for ordering copies of the standards are shown. TC 56 documents are also available through the American National Standards Institute (www.ansi.org).

Why is membership in the US TAG important?

A particular value of IEC Dependability Standards is their global acceptance. When it is necessary for an enterprise to deal with matters related to Reliability, Maintainability or Service Support in matters of international commerce it is logical to refer to these documents. However if US commercial interests do not actively involve their employees and representatives in the creation of these documents they may regret the eventual outcome. It is no secret that European Union companies are much more involved in IEC work than US companies.

How does one join the US TAG to TC 56?

Membership in the US TAG is open to all national interested parties who indicate that they are directly and materially affected by the activity of the TAG. A national interested party is any individual located in the US, representing an organization, company, government agency or themselves, including US branch offices of foreign companies. Membership is not free; an annual fee of \$250 is imposed by the USNC for each party participating. Application forms are available via the US Standards Group on QEDS website: <http://standardsgroup.asq.org>.

To whom may further questions be directed?

Further questions or inquiries can be directed to the US TAG TA whose name and address is shown below.

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Contacts:

Applications for membership can be obtained from Erin Hogg at ehogg@asq.org.

For more information, visit the Standards Group web site: <http://standardsgroup.asq.org>.