API Standards Program and Procedures Briefing Paper

Since 1924, API has been the leader in developing voluntary industry standards that promote reliability and safety through the use of proven engineering practices. The API Standards Program is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the authority on U.S. standards, and undergoes regular program audits to ensure it meets ANSI’s Essential Requirements of openness, balance, consensus and due process. This is the same body that accredits programs at several national laboratories. API’s standards are developed through a collaborative effort with industry experts, as well the best and brightest technical experts from government¹, academia and other interested stakeholders.

- API maintains more than 600 standards—recommended practices, specifications, codes, technical publications, reports and studies—that cover all aspects of the oil and natural gas industry, including 240 focused on exploration and production activities. API standards are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain current, with the normal review cycle being five years, although some standards may be reviewed more frequently based on advances in technology or other demonstrations of need.

- API’s standards are referenced in federal regulations because they are recognized to be industry best practices. For example, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) references 88 API standards in its offshore regulations. Overall, over 100 API standards are referenced in more than 270 citations by government agencies, including the Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Transportation’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, in addition to BSEE. Additionally, API’s standards are the most widely petroleum industry standards by state regulators, with 180 API standards cited over 3300 times in state regulations.

- API’s standards are also widely cited by international regulators. A recent study² on the use of standards by international regulators in 14 producing regions found that “API standards are dominating, with 225 references, including 49 API Manual of Petroleum Measurement (MPMS) standards.”

¹ The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995, PL 103-113 mandates the use of consensus standards in regulations and also states “Federal Agencies and departments shall consult with voluntary, private sector consensus standards bodies and shall...(participate with such bodies in the development of technical standards.”