A higher standard in safety

Working together to shape global safety, sustainability and security
Pursuing safety through expertise, rigor and collaboration

Every day, across virtually every industry and from offices around the globe, you’ll find Underwriters Laboratories focused on a single mission: Working for a safer world. Underwriters Laboratories is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the discovery and application of scientific knowledge. We conduct rigorous independent research and analyze safety data, share knowledge and develop standards to guide safer commercialization of evolving technologies.

UL Standards — the standards development organization (SDO) within Underwriters Laboratories — brings together multidisciplinary stakeholders from around the world to collaborate, probe, discuss, and ultimately foster safer and sustainable living and working environments through a consensus-driven process.

We fund our work through grants, the licensing of standards documents and the business activities of our affiliate, UL, which also advances our shared mission through its testing, verification and certification, training and advisory services, data-driven reporting and decision-making tools. At UL Standards, we work to bring peace of mind to consumers, manufacturers, authorities having jurisdiction, inspection authorities, and professionals focused on mitigating risk, injury or danger. Here’s how.

Why standards matter

Manufacturers, service providers and consumers must be assured that the products and services they produce and rely upon will operate correctly, effectively and safely. UL Standards develops the process and documentation that ensure these products and services are tested to meet the highest levels of safety, security and sustainability. In 2019, for example, we developed 23 new Standards with the potential for worldwide impact.

Whether it’s initiating a new safety standard or revising an existing standard to meet new requirements, we combine extensive research capabilities, scientific expertise, broad stakeholder input, and an uncompromising focus on quality when addressing safety and sustainability issues.

Today, manufacturers that meet these rigorous standards can differentiate their offering and gain a competitive advantage in a marketplace where industry and product information is easier than ever for consumers and other users to obtain. And more important than ever.

More than products

The UL Standards development process goes beyond traditional industrial and consumer products. Our expertise extends to the testing of systems and services, where we work to measure and validate performance and examine the impact upon environmental health and sustainability.

As new technologies and services emerge, we are responsive to developing new standards or adding timely updates to existing ones. Our continuous maintenance model helps us monitor such activities and ensures we are always open to new standards proposals at any time.

STANDARDS SPOTLIGHT

UL 3600 — The Standard for Measuring and Reporting Circular Economy Aspects of Products, Sites and Organizations

Circular economy, the system of reducing or eliminating waste and fostering reuse, has lacked consistent metrics. UL 3600 is intended to normalize methods, terminology and level of transparency for measuring circularity; passing information between entities; and making claims related to material flows and their environmental impact.
STANDARDS SPOTLIGHT

UL 4600 – The Standard for Safety for the Evaluation of Autonomous Products

The scope of UL 4600 includes safety principles and processes for evaluating fully autonomous products in the autonomous vehicle industry. It requires a safety argument along with risk analysis and safety-relevant aspects of human-machine interaction for nondrivers. Additionally, UL 4600 does not mandate the use of any specific technology in creating the autonomous system to afford design process flexibility.

Multiple perspectives with a single purpose

Every STP process is driven by consensus. This ensures the committee takes into account the experience and perspectives of a diverse array of members from different interest groups. The consensus process also promotes a fair, collaborative and transparent approach to each proposal.

A consensus-based standard is achieved only after a majority of STP members have returned a ballot and at least two-thirds of these voting members approve the standard (excluding abstentions, negatives without comment and negatives based on material not under consideration). Negative votes or public objections receive consideration by the STP during a recirculation stage that affords all participants the opportunity to consider their point of view on the proposal and its potential advancement.

Since unanimity is not required for a proposal to pass, consensus among the members is the threshold for new or revised standards.

Audited and internationally approved

While representation by professionals from 37 countries demonstrates the international scope of STPs, the process is also vetted by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and the General Bureau of Standards of the Ministry of Economy in Mexico. This level of international scrutiny reinforces a refined and proven approach. UL Standards is the only SDO capable of developing national standards for the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

A local perspective

We believe that the most impactful work is done at the local level. Our teams are spread out across the globe — in both developed and developing countries — to ensure relevant, meaningful standards for everyone. We work with international and regional SDOs to identify regional needs and cultural inputs. We also foster local education and outreach through seminars, symposiums, digital tools, and close collaboration on the ground. You’ll find UL Standards teams spearheading safety initiatives across the globe.

Minimizing inefficiencies, reducing costs

As globalization accelerates, companies source components in one country, build products in another then distribute them across many other regions. UL Standards focuses on harmonization of standards to facilitate more efficient trade in such scenarios. We look for commonalities in standards, identify critical national requirements and provide a single harmonized standard. Key benefits include:

- Reduced compliance costs for manufacturers
- Less complexity in testing/auditing
- More efficient production
- Streamlined regional trade

A global dialogue driven by expertise and consensus

The importance of impactful standards reflects the rigor that goes into developing each one. The process begins with the online submission of proposals via the UL Collaborative Standards Development System (CSDS) and the convening of a standards technical panel (STP). Each STP comprises individuals who represent a variety of interest groups including:

- AHJ/Regulator
- Producer
- Testing and standards organization
- Supply chain
- Government
- Consumer
- General interest
- Commerce/Industrial user
- Delegates from national standards bodies outside the U.S.

The STP is led by an STP chair assisted by a project manager; a full-time UL Standards professional. The STP reviews the proposal, refines and collaborates on key elements, specifications or wording; and votes for adoption and publication. To ensure total transparency in the process, every proposal is made available for public review and input on the CSDS platform.
A unique mission. 
An experienced team.

Since the first UL Standard was published in 1903, our team has led the development of more than 1,800 science-based Standards through our understanding of the importance of safety, security and sustainability on a global level. We develop standards that are proven, trusted and backed by safety science research – fully implementing the expertise, perspective and ongoing support of stakeholders in 63 countries around the world.

Within our organization, a dedicated team reviews market needs across the globe to stay relevant to the market and innovation. We view international outreach as a partnership, coordinating with safety professionals, consumers and governmental bodies to share knowledge and address local safety needs through consensus-based standards that are relevant and effective.

In addition, our Data Science team supports our mission by ensuring all standards are shaped by data. Our innovative Safety Data Lake, a powerful interface, delivers free and open access to data and analytics for stakeholders focused on safety. A comprehensive search tool and artificial intelligence help these users simplify their analysis of more than 18 million records from disparate sources.

We’re committed to bringing our values to the forefront of every initiative, ensuring open dialogue, transparency and inclusion in the standards development process.

STANDARDS SPOTLIGHT

Legalized Cannabis Standards

Standardization provides safety assurance for emerging industries experiencing rapid expansion, including the legalized cannabis sector. Underwriters Laboratories has published multiple standards that address supply chain safety, sustainability and security. For example, CAN/ULC S440-010 the Standard for Safety of Buildings and Facilities Utilized for the Cultivation, Production and Processing of Cannabis was developed to balance the need for fire safety, egress and optimal security while also addressing equipment and system safety. Other standards cover plant oil extraction equipment, indoor air quality and horticultural lighting.
Get involved

With more than 1,400 total annual appointments to STPs, there's ample opportunity for interested stakeholders to participate in standards development. The UL Standards team actively recruits STP members on an ongoing basis from developed and developing regions around the world.

If you have specialized expertise in any area served by UL Standards, we would like to hear from you. Your participation on an STP is vital to ensuring the quality and impact of every standard we publish.

Of course, you do not have to be an STP member to participate in standards development. You can be informed as a stakeholder:

• We will notify you when proposals are available.
• You can provide input and feedback throughout the process.
• Your voice will be heard and taken into consideration.

UL Standards is always looking for new contributors to standards development to bolster the credibility of each standard, ensure transparency and add to a more objective, internationally represented process.

To learn more, visit UL.org or contact us via UL.org/contact.