



INTERNATIONAL  
**TRADE**  
ADMINISTRATION

# Understanding the U.S. Standards System

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# “Standard” Definitions

- **Standards** – voluntary product technical specifications, in the U.S. standards development is market driven
- **Technical Regulations** – mandatory technical specifications, which may include particular standards or conformity assessment procedures
- **Conformity Assessment** – the process/system to verify conformance of a product to a standard and/or technical regulation (e.g. testing, certification)

*Informally each of these areas can be referred to as “Standards”*

# Basics on Standards



We believe the U.S. system fosters  
innovation, economic growth, and  
competitiveness

# “Standard” Definitions

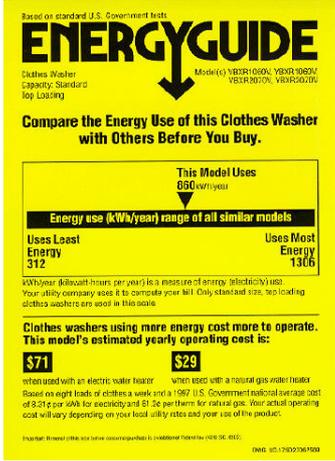
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# Technical Regulations: Examples



Mandatory energy labeling



“California Emissions”

Building codes



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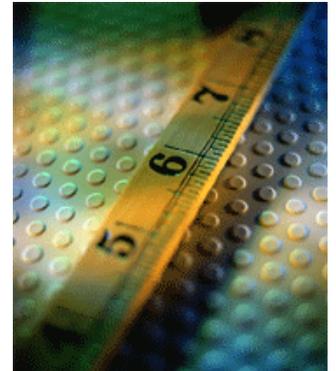
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# Conformity Assessment

Conformity Assessment can be conducted by:

- first party – seller or manufacturer
- second party – purchaser or user
- third party – an independent entity that has no interest in transactions between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> parties



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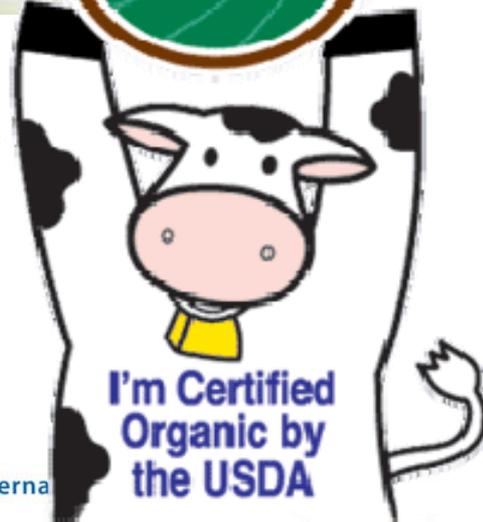
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# Significance of Standards

- Standards can facilitate efficient international trade and its benefits, ensure confidence and protect citizens
- They also can be used intentionally or unintentionally to impede access to foreign markets.



# Standards



# Basics of U.S. Standards System

- The U.S. Standards System...
  - Product of U.S. history and culture
  - Strong tradition of public-private partnerships and resistance to government control
  - Decentralized, dynamic and "bottom-up"
  - Private-sector led and market-driven.



# Consensus Based Approach



# Are US Standards Really Voluntary?

- Voluntary refers to how they were developed.
- Compliance is another issue.





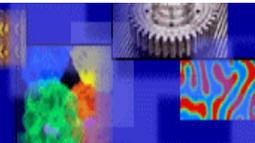
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# U.S. Standards Organizations



National Institute of  
Standards and Technology

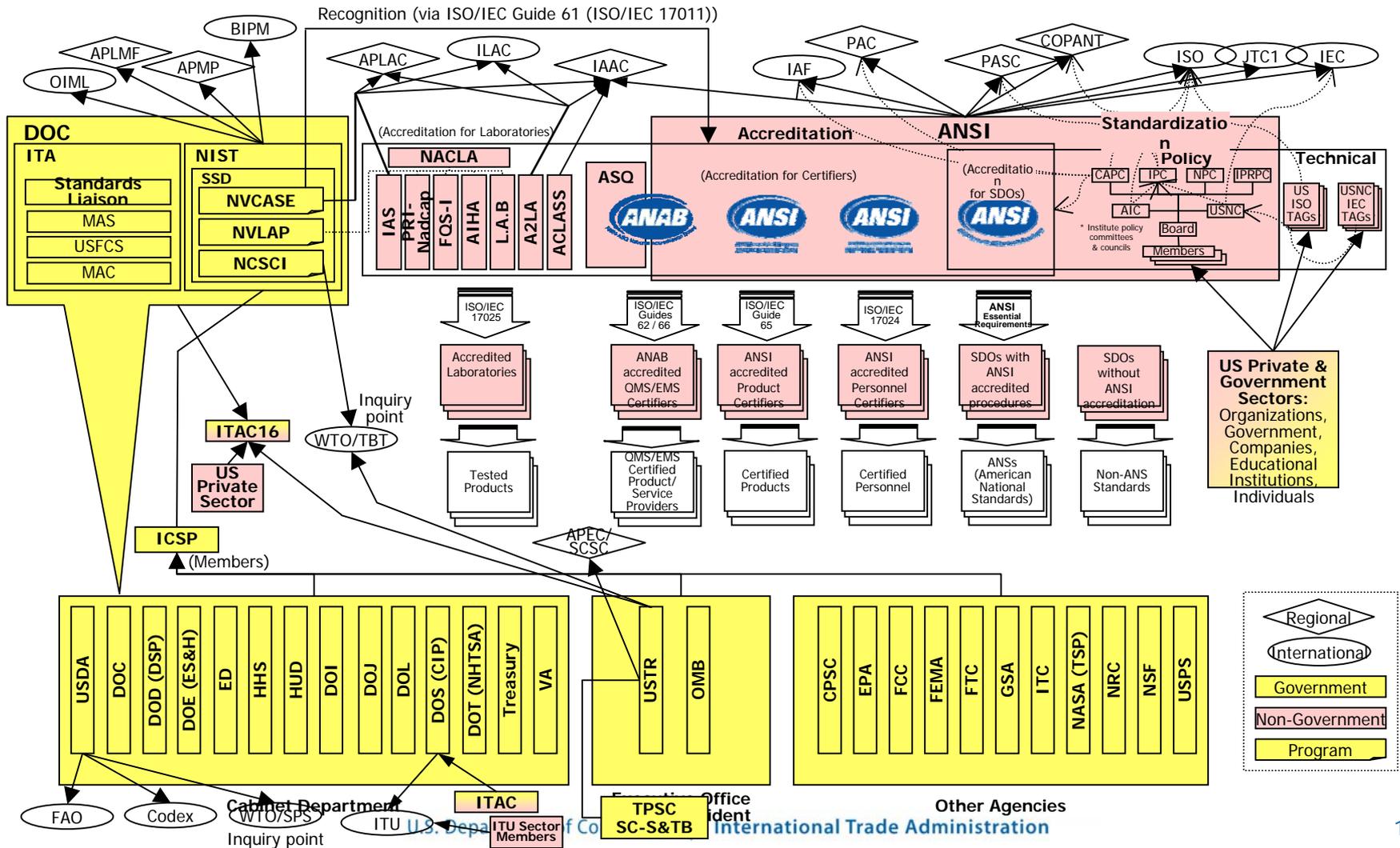


**NIST**

*...working with industry to foster innovation, trade, security and jobs*

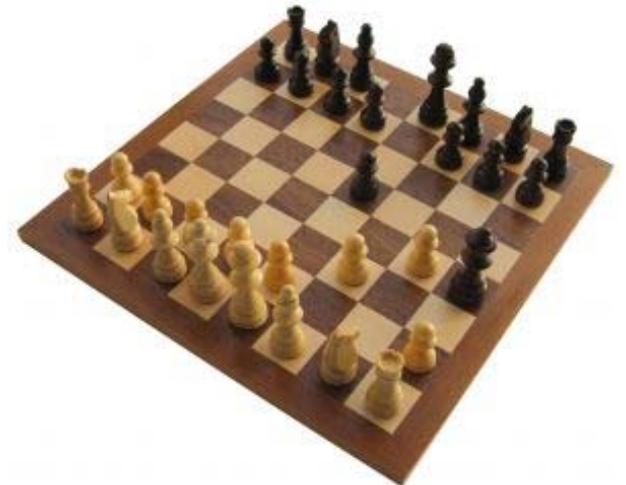
# Is this confusing?

## Standards and Conformity Assessment Bodies of the U.S.



# Key Players

- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- Standards developing organizations (SDOs)
- Government
- Consortia



# For more information

- <http://www.ansi.org>
- <http://www.nist.gov/>
- <http://www.standardslearn.org/>
- [http://www.standardsportal.org/usa\\_en/global\\_resource.aspx](http://www.standardsportal.org/usa_en/global_resource.aspx)
- [Where can I find information about U.S. standards and mandatory requirements \(regulations\)?](#)
- [How will I know if voluntary standards are being updated?](#)
- [How will I know if mandatory requirements \(regulations\) are being updated?](#)
- [Can I comment on the U.S. standards and mandatory requirements that relate to my product?](#)
- [Where can I find State-level mandatory requirements \(Regulations\)?](#)

# Thank you!

