10 INTERPRETATIONS

10.1 General. Interpretations are formal written responses to written (e.g., letter, fax or e-mail) inquiries which are transmitted to the inquirer on ASME interpretation letterhead.

Informal responses to inquiries may be offered by ASME staff and volunteers. Such individual responses should be accompanied by a statement making it clear that they are the opinion of the individual, not interpretations. These responses may be either verbal or written. If written, the responses shall not be on ASME interpretation letterhead.

10.2 Requirements for Interpretations

(a) Interpretations shall be written in an “inquiry” and “reply” format.

(b) The inquiry or the reply shall include the name and specific edition(s) of the standard(s) being interpreted.

(c) Existing interpretations shall be revised when there is an identified need for a correction or clarification. There shall be a statement advising that ASME may reconsider its interpretation when additional information is made available.

(d) Interpretations shall not revise existing requirements or establish new requirements.

(e) Interpretations shall not include explanations describing why the standard is written the way it is, except they may include any rationale that was approved through the consensus process as a part of the standards action.

(f) Interpretations shall not approve, certify, rate or endorse any item, construction, proprietary device or activity.

(g) Interpretations shall be transmitted to the inquirer on ASME interpretation letterhead signed by the staff person responsible for administrative activities of the standards committee or cognizant subcommittee.

(h) Those interpretations not included in a special interpretation publication service shall be published on the ASME Web site and/or in the Codes and Standards section of Mechanical Engineering magazine.

10.3 Approval Committee. Interpretations may be approved by either of two committees.

(a) Consensus Committee or Cognizant Subcommittee. Interpretations may be approved by a vote of the consensus committee or cognizant subcommittee. No member interest category shall have a majority on the cognizant subcommittee.
(b) **Special Committee.** Interpretations may be approved by the unanimous vote of a special committee. Members of the special committee shall be members of the consensus committee or subordinate group responsible for the standard. No member interest category shall have a majority on the special committee. The special committee shall have at least five members, one of which shall be the ASME staff secretary responsible for the standard. Special committee members shall be appointed by the Chair of the standards committee or cognizant subcommittee.

One member of the special committee shall be designated as Chair. The Chair shall be appointed by the Chair of the standards committee.

10.4 **Approval Voting Process - Consensus Committee or Cognizant Subcommittee**
(referred to as “committee” hereafter in this subsection for simplicity)

(a) Votes may be obtained by letter, fax, recorded votes at meetings, or electronic means.

(b) The Secretary shall submit the proposal to the committee members along with:

- a proposed inquiry and reply, and
- a copy of the original inquiry.

(c) The vote form shall contain three forms of response: **no objection, objection,** and **not voting.**

(d) When the vote is taken at a meeting, no objection by at least two thirds of members present is required to approve the interpretation.

(e) When a vote is taken other than at a meeting:

1) All members of the committee shall have an opportunity to vote.

2) Voting periods shall be closed upon receipt of all responses but not later than four weeks after the date of issue unless the committee or a committee officer extends the voting period.

3) Members casting objections shall provide written justification and shall describe an alternative action that will resolve their objection.

4) Votes received by the Secretary after the voting period will not be considered unless an extension of the period has been established by the committee or committee officer. At the close of the voting period, the Secretary shall submit a complete voting tally to the committee. All objections and comments shall be carefully considered by the committee Chair and their resolution attempted. Responses to substantive comments and objections shall be documented and made available to committee members.
5) Technical changes made in a proposed interpretation as a result of objections and comments received shall be submitted to the committee with a two-week period given in which the members shall have the opportunity to express opposition to the changes. If after consideration, objections cannot be resolved, they shall be reported to the committee with copies of the reason for the objections and the responses. Each member who wishes to change his/her original vote shall so indicate within a specified time frame. A reconsideration ballot may be issued. The members who submitted the unresolved objections shall be notified of their right to appeal.

6) **No objection** by at least two thirds of members voting is required to approve the interpretation, provided at least half of the members vote.

### 10.5 Approval Voting Process - Special Committee

(a) All members of the special committee shall vote.

(b) Votes may be obtained by letter, fax, recorded votes at meetings, or electronic means.

(c) The Secretary shall submit the proposal to the special committee along with:
   - a proposed inquiry and reply, and
   - a copy of the original inquiry.

(d) The vote form shall contain two forms of response: **no objection** and **objection**.

(e) Members casting objections shall provide written justification and shall describe an alternative action that will resolve their objection.

(f) Voting periods may be closed upon receipt of all responses or two weeks after the date of issue unless the committee or committee officer extends the voting period.

(g) The Secretary shall submit a complete voting tally to the special committee. All objections and comments shall be carefully considered by the special committee Chair and their resolution attempted. Responses to substantive comments and objections shall be documented and made available to special committee members.

(h) Technical changes made in a proposed interpretation as a result of objections and comments received shall be submitted to the special committee with a two-week period given in which the members shall have the opportunity to express opposition to the changes. If after consideration, objections cannot be resolved, the interpretation shall be submitted to the consensus committee or the cognizant subcommittee for consideration. See para. 10.4.

(i) Interpretations are approved when all members vote **no objection**.

### 10.6 Information Copies.

Information copies of all transmittals shall be sent to the Chair and Vice Chair of the standards committee.