

PHTA'S TECHNICAL REORGANIZATION USHERS IN A NEW ERA OF LEADERSHIP

By Genevieve Lynn and Amy Willer, Pool & Hot Tub Alliance Staff

WITHOUT THE technical experts working in the pool, spa and hot tub industry, recreational water would not be the safe and enjoyable space we know today. To underscore the vital role that the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA) plays in developing industry standards and codes, PHTA is expanding its technical side with the formation of an advisory council with oversight over five committees.

The newly created Technical Advisory Council (TAC) is responsible for providing scientific and technical guidance and support to the PHTA Board of Directors (Board). This group will oversee the technical accuracy of all technical, safety, and health affairs of the association, including the development of policy recommendations to the Board, and, when approved, implementation of such policies. The TAC will also approve initiation of a revision or reaffirmation of an existing PHTA standard; appoint Standard Writing Committee (SWC) Chairs and Vice-Chairs; form task force

committees to address specific technical issues; review all consensus standards; oversee the review of all educational materials; and recommend scientific research. The process will be more transparent and responsive to the needs of the organization.

This initiative will create a Center of Technical Excellence within PHTA to establish the association as the leader in standards development and education for the industry. "I believe wholeheartedly that on all of the PHTA pillars — Educate, Advocate, Elevate — the development of standards and codes is at the core of what we do," says Board Chairman-Elect Charlie Claffey of Claffey Pools. "Essentially, if we don't continue to lead, then we will be subject to a reactionary mode to people who may not understand them like we do. That's what we do, what our industry does — we are proactive and not reactive." It is imperative to build a safe product that is compliant with regulations and based on expert knowledge, he says.

According to Board member Dr. Joseph Laurino of Periodic Products,

Inc., who will serve as the inaugural chair of the TAC, "The major objective of the reorganization is to improve the responsiveness of the organization to the technical and educational needs of its members." To this end, PHTA will rely on the high level of technical expertise of the volunteers and support staff as well as its current prominent position as an ANSI-Accredited Standards Developer (ASD). And the main challenge is the need to expedite the standard development process to incorporate ever-evolving technologies and ideas into new and current standards and codes, he stated.

"A process to routinely review standards will flow into education, into manuals to assist our membership and keep up with technology which is rapidly changing," Claffey asserted. "The whole reorganization is geared towards that and more. I'm passionate about development and refinement of standards." Alignment of the PHTA standards, the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code (ISPS), Builders Manual, and Service Manual is on the

list of projects ahead. Development of standards side by side with the ISPSC is important, he says. The revised structure provides an open and cohesive process that integrates committee-developed standards and technical content into education materials, technical presentations, consumer safety materials, fact sheets, and more.

The TAC will coordinate activities among the following committees:

- **Standards Policy Committee (SPC)**
The SPC will facilitate the movement of PHTA standards through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approval process, create new Standard Writing Committees (SWCs) and maintain existing ones, and coordinate the development of new standards. The committee may also develop appendices, checklists and worksheets.

- **Recreational Water and Air Quality Committee (RWAQC)**

Formerly known as the Recreational Water Quality Committee (RWQC), the new RWAQC will develop and maintain information on chemical products, processes, and devices that affect water and air quality maintenance of swimming pools, spas and hot tubs. Committee members will create and update PHTA Fact Sheets, provide input on water and air quality sections of PHTA standards, and develop technical educational programs.

- **Code Action Committee (CAC)**

The CAC will monitor the ISPSC, as well as other pool codes and external standards such as the IAPMO Pool Code and the Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC) that will benefit the membership of PHTA. This group will be responsible for developing and maintaining the information found in these documents, and for recommending updates based on new scientific data, research, and sound engineering practices.

- **Editorial Review Committee (ERC)**

The ERC will be responsible for reviewing and editing all educational materials produced by PHTA. This includes not only PHTA standards, but also consumer safety brochures; fact sheets; and PHTA and GENESIS course materials such as manuals, online content, workbooks, and presentations.

- **Research and Grants Committee (RGC)**

The TAC will form this committee to address research and grants in 2023 or 2024.

When implemented, the new process will aid in the adoption of PHTA standards into relevant building and health codes. "The entire technical side and advocacy is so important. All standards we develop are critical to elevate the industry. A code does so through law," Claffey says.

The ANSI consensus voting body, the Standards Consensus Committee (SCC), would continue to maintain their independent standards approval process, thereby meeting ANSI Essential Requirements for standards development, and, at the same time, incorporate aspects of the new technical structure.

As a PHTA member, Claffey says

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one of the top reasons he joined the Alliance is to support the technical side of the house. "It's my strong belief that part of what I give in membership fees is to make sure that the industry funds codes and standards, to make sure that endeavor can continue in perpetuity and thrive for years to come. How do we enhance the value proposition for members? Give them the tools necessary to build, service, maintain 100% of the time — provide the real-life implementation, the practical guidance. The goal is to elevate the industry so ultimately the product for the end user

has a level of consistency of quality and safety they deserve. PHTA is invaluable in that arena because defining what's right today may not be the same as three years from today."

To introduce this initiative, PHTA will hold a kickoff Standards Symposium. The industry is invited to this 2022 International Pool | Spa | Patio Expo event to learn more about the technical reorganization and provide feedback on standards scheduled for development in 2023, including a revision of ANSI/APSP/ICC-16 2017 American National Standard for Suction Outlet Fitting

Assemblies (SOFA) for Use in Pools, Spas and Hot Tubs, the successor standard for the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (VGBA). The event will take place Monday, November 14 at the Expo in Las Vegas.

As mentioned prior, the new SPC will oversee the Standard Writing Committees. The Alliance will maintain SWCs for each existing PHTA standard and create SWCs for new standards. Each SWC is responsible for developing and drafting an ANSI standard, responding to comments, and creating supplemental materials, such as appendices, as needed. Every five years, PHTA needs to revise these standards to ensure they stay current — which is not an easy task — or reaffirm them. The association greatly appreciates all volunteers throughout the industry and beyond who serve on the SWCs.

Drawing from his experience, Dr. Laurino shared that, "As an SWC chair, it is difficult to have complete representation of all the desired technical experts on the writing committee. With the new structure,

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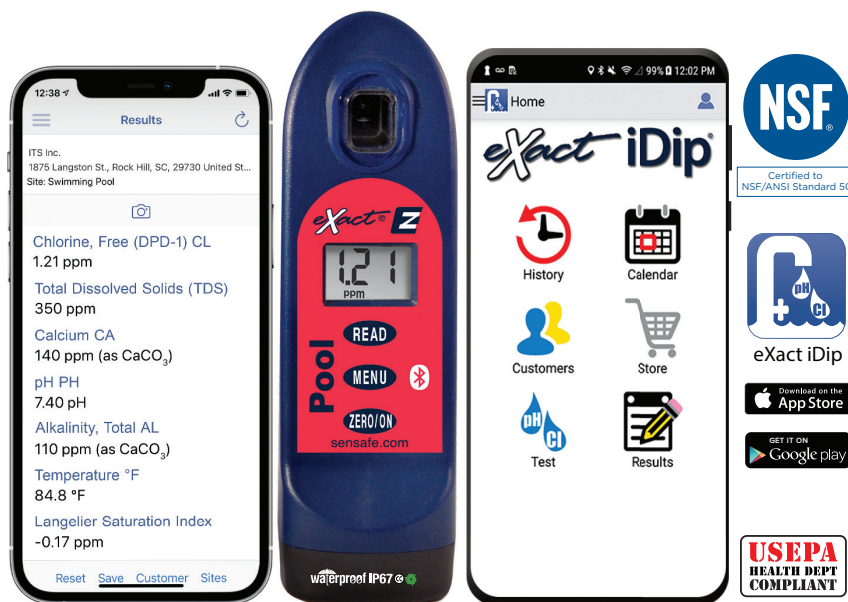
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a panel of technical experts will be available to all the SWCs to address any technical concerns or questions that may arise." Additionally, SWCs will be able to direct questions to the RWAQC, CAC, and ERC which should facilitate the standard writing and revision process, he says.

This expansion of the technical reorganization will take place in 2023. The PHTA Board of Directors has already appointed the chair of each committee that reports to the TAC. In the next several months, the Alliance will begin asking for volunteers to serve on the various committees.

"If you are knowledgeable about a specific technical area or areas, enjoy discussing with and learning from others, and are willing to devote time and effort to the industry, you should consider volunteering for one of PHTA's technical and/or standard writing committees," Dr. Laurino says. "Every single person involved in standards development should be applauded," Claffey says, "and there are opportunities galore for involvement." He encourages those who are interested to go to the PHTA website, complete a Willingness to Serve form, define core competencies and support the industry. "We need the help and a good cross-section of people. Be involved at all levels! What we do is crucial for the next generation."

Members of the key group who guided and structured the technical reorganization include Dr. Laurino, Franceen Gonzales of WhiteWater West Industries, Steve Barnes of AquaStar Pool Products, Jody O'Grady of Taylor Water Technologies LLC, Ken Gregory of Pentair, Dr. James Egan of LaMotte, PHTA President and CEO Sabeena Hickman, as well as PHTA staff members Justin Wiley, Genevieve Lynn and Blake Pavlik. The Alliance demonstrated its commitment to codes and standards with the hiring of Wiley in February 2022. As PHTA Vice President of Government Relations, Standards and Codes, he brings prior experience as the former Vice President of Government Relations at the International Code Council (ICC), a leading source of model building codes and building safety solutions. In his current position, he leads advocacy efforts for the pool, spa and hot tub industry on federal, state and local levels. He is also responsible for the development and maintenance

of PHTA's safety and performance standards, and their adoption into codes and regulations across the nation.

As the unified voice of the industry, PHTA protects and advances the common interests of the industry by providing education, advocacy, standards development, research, and market growth to increase its members' professionalism, knowledge, and profitability. PHTA has been the leading ANSI-Accredited Standards Developer for the nation's public and residential pool, spa and hot tub standards since 1983. These standards serve as the foundation for the ISPSC, produced with the ICC, a longtime collaborator. When it comes to standards development, the association is committed to balancing the needs of directly and materially interested parties without dominance by one particular interest category, individual or company. PHTA casts a wide net when looking for volunteers to serve on the technical committees to ensure that the people developing these standards have a deep understanding of the different facets of the industry.

The Board, technical leadership and staff are looking forward to implementing these exciting changes and furthering PHTA's mission to elevate the pool, spa, and hot tub industry to the highest level. For more information and to learn how you can get involved and participate in these technical committees, please visit the PHTA website at <https://phta.org/standards> or contact the PHTA Standards Department at standards@phta.org. ~

The PHTA Recreational Water Quality Committee

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Kevin Cox, NSF International
Dr. James Egan, LaMotte Company
Philip Escobedo, Fluidra
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Dr. Joseph Laurino, Periodic Products, PHTA Board of Directors Liaison
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Consultants:
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