



# ISO 18480—International Standards for Facility Management

By Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., AIA, CEFP, GGP

Among the many landmark initiatives that the APPA Standards and Codes Council (ASCC) is now engaged in is the development of ISO 18480, International Standards for Facility Management. This is a critically important activity, given that APPA members have worked diligently over decades to build best practices and a vibrant body of knowledge, from which

language and concepts are supporting contributions toward creation of an internationally recognized suite of facility management standards. This standards work is being conducted with the ISO Technical Committee 267 (ISO/TC 267)—*Facilities Management*.

The International Standards Organization (ISO) is a source of many standards that may be used in your nation

or business. The most recognizable of them is ISO 9000, *Quality Management Systems*. Many firms receive ISO 9000 certification to demonstrate to their clients and customers that they ascribe to a structured process that improves the quality of their products or services for clients. At some institutions you may require certification of designers in an attempt to limit the errors and omissions in design documents. The requirement may also be driven by a desire for “best value” from any vendor.

## ISO AND HIGHER EDUCATION

ISO is not limited to standards for quality management—they have many standards that may affect higher education organizations. Two standards that may be familiar are ISO 14000, *Environmental Management Systems*, and ISO 22300, *Societal Security—Business Continuity Management Systems*.

Since 2012, when TC 267 started its work, it has successfully completed drafts of two standards. TC 267 Work Group 1 (WG 1) has a final draft for ISO 18480-1, *Facility Management Part 1 Terms and Definitions*; and a final draft of ISO 18480-2, *Facilities Management—Part 2: Guidance on Strategic Sourcing and the Development of Agreements*, produced by a second Work Group (WG 2). Both final drafts are



awaiting formal review, and approval is expected by ISO within the next year.

Looking forward, the newly established Work Group 3 (WG 3) will develop the *Facilities Management Systems* standard within two years. WG 3 presently has 37 members, including 9 members from the United States. Participants include myself, Brooks Baker (former APPA President and chair, APPA Standards and Codes Council), and APPA Associate Vice President John Bernhards. The working group is chaired by Jim Whittaker, president of Facility Engineering Associates, an APPA Business Partner member.

The Management System Standard (MSS) is essentially the plan-do-check-act (PDCA) cycle for process improvements. The standard will be developed following the ISO format, including introduction and requirements (comprising multiple clauses). In general, the standard will follow according to *plan* (definitions of the organization), *do* (operations), *check* (performance evaluation), and *act* (improvement). The committee members were provided with copies of similar PDCA standards to prepare them at the first WG 3 meeting, held October 9-10 in Denver, Colorado.

#### CONCEPTS GAIN MOMENTUM

The ISO committee system is similar to many of the standards development organizations in the United States. Committee meetings are hosted periodically by a volunteer country or organization. The concept of management systems standards for various disciplines is gaining momentum within ISO as well as within European standards development bodies, to include the British Standards Institute (BSI).

As with many groups of like-minded individuals, subject matter experts don't always easily agree on definitions when developing an international standard. Among the interesting debates that occurred within TC 267's WG 1 was whether to use the term "facility management" or "facilities management" when describing the profession. As odd

as it may sound, the *Terms and Definitions* standard required a number of meetings as well as compromise among all engaged representatives from the many nations in attendance. As a representative of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) U.S. Delegation to WG 1, which developed the TC267

*Terms and Definitions* standard, I found it frustrating but also fulfilling; we accomplished and learned a lot from our peers and colleagues from around the world.

The WG 2 team, which includes U.S. ANSI delegates Brooks Baker and John Bernhards, made significant progress but was sometimes delayed with the slow-



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ness of WG 1. The BSI Standard EN 15221-2, *Facility Management. Guidance on How to Prepare Facility Management Agreements*, identifies key elements to have in any service agreement, including agreements within the organization. The standard addresses such things as definition of the service, risks associated with service delivery, roles and responsibilities of service providers, and measurement of service delivery results.

### ISO—FOUNDATION FOR PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY

Development of international standards for facility management has positive implications for APPA members as well as some challenges. Those members who have kept up with APPA educational programs, such as the Annual Conference, Supervisor's Toolkit, APPA U (Institute for Facilities Management and Leader-

ship Academy), or those who have availed themselves of the Facilities Management Evaluation Program (FMEP) or obtained credentials (CEFP), are already well prepared for an international standard. Those facility professionals who feel that the old ways still work will be challenged.

International standards should not be feared. They are the foundation for performance and quality organizations, but they are also voluntary. By way of example, not all businesses are ISO 9000 certified; it is not likely that all facility organizations will seek certification under ISO standards for facility management either, although there is a strong emphasis and interest in Europe to pursue such a certification.

### AN EXCITING TIME

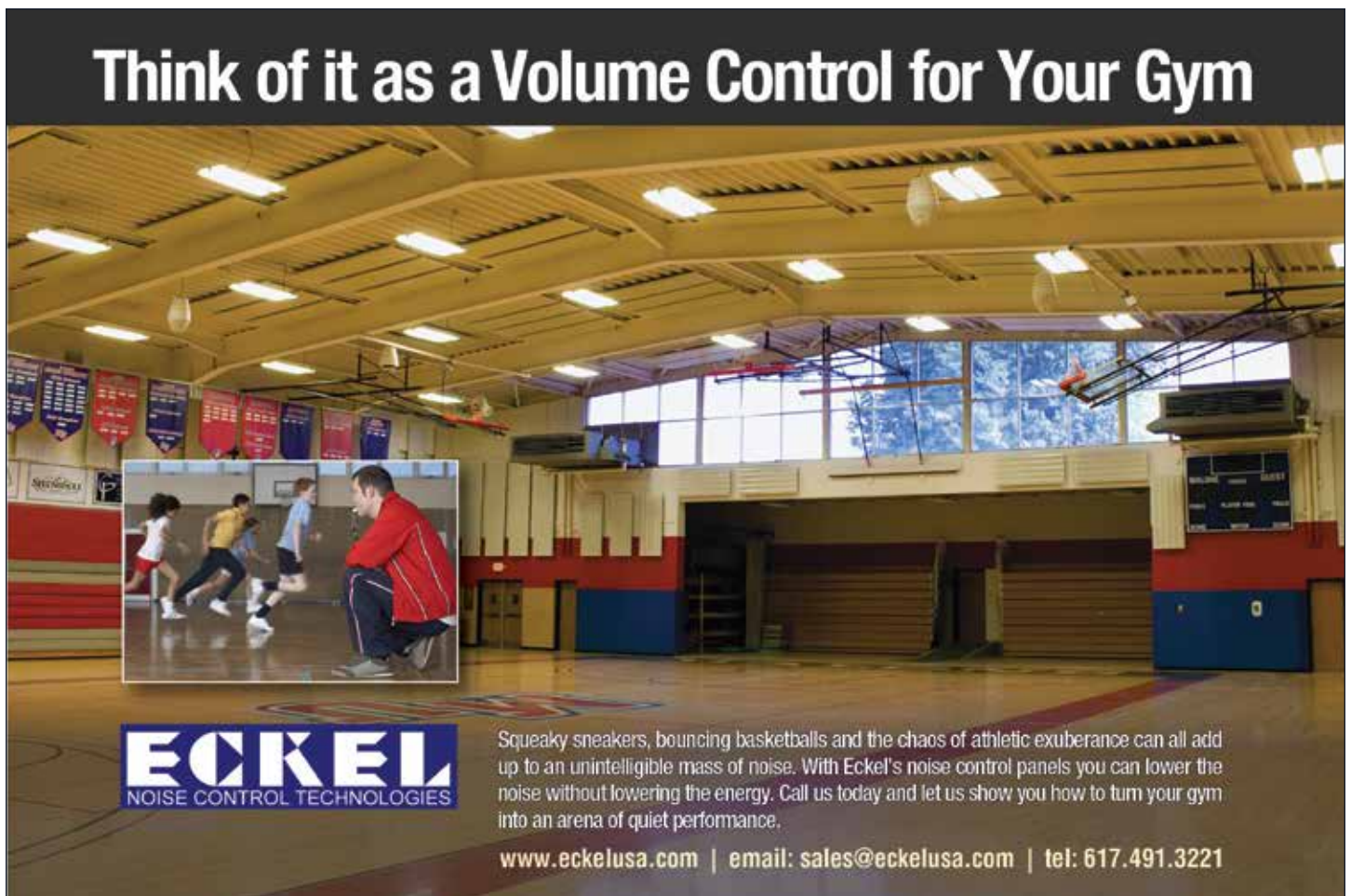
Regardless of whether a facility organization becomes certified, these new and

developing standards will provide an excellent target and outline for demonstrating the effectiveness of the facility organization. This should be an exciting time for any facility officer because the field of facility management is becoming recognized as an important profession worldwide.

All educational institutions can be certain that they are well represented in this international effort, in large measure thanks to APPA and the growing and important influence of its standards and codes program of work, made possible through its Standards and Codes Council. ☞

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