



APPA Proposes “Educational Facility Standard” to National Fire Protection Association

By Michael A. Anthony, P.E.

APPA’s Code Advisory Task Force is working on an initiative to approach the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) about developing a national safety standard for our industry. The objective is to create a framework for leading safety practices in educational facility management.

Educational facility safety infrastructure is growing at an accelerating rate across multiple dimensions of people, processes, and technology. This infrastructure needs an industry-specific document that would have the following benefits:

- Provide a compilation of existing NFPA codes and standards and fill

gaps that are not now covered by any document.

- Function as a best practice document for cost and benefit benchmarks.
- Provide a framework for the evolution of leading safety practices in much the same way that NFPA-99, Standard for Health Care Facilities, has provided a living document that is widely used in the healthcare industry.

If the initiative is successful, the educational facility standard will be approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), adoptable in whole or in part by any public or private organization. The degree to which a living document for the educational facilities industry becomes a tool of col-

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laboration will be reflected in effective risk characterization and budgeting.

Managing large, complex, capital-intensive educational facility infrastructure assets with unique architectural and social identities is different from managing other asset classes. Differences in everything from department culture to annual facility use patterns mean that facility managers cannot implement the same safety approaches in all buildings. Approaches must be scaled to the occupancy type and informed by the interconnectedness and the specifics of a given facility. One of the desired outcomes of this initiative would be to provide coherence to the broad subject of educational facility safety infrastructure that is unique to multi-building campuses with a variety of risk aggregations.

NFPA is an accredited standards-developing organization by ANSI with a 113-year history of working with a variety of organizations and entities in developing best practice documents such as the National Electric Code®, the Life Safety Code®, the Building Energy Code®, and the Building Construction and Safety Code®. In addition to being the largest and most widely accepted codes and standards developing organization in the world, the NFPA offers the most transparent and affordable platform for an industry to develop an ANSI-approved best-practice document.

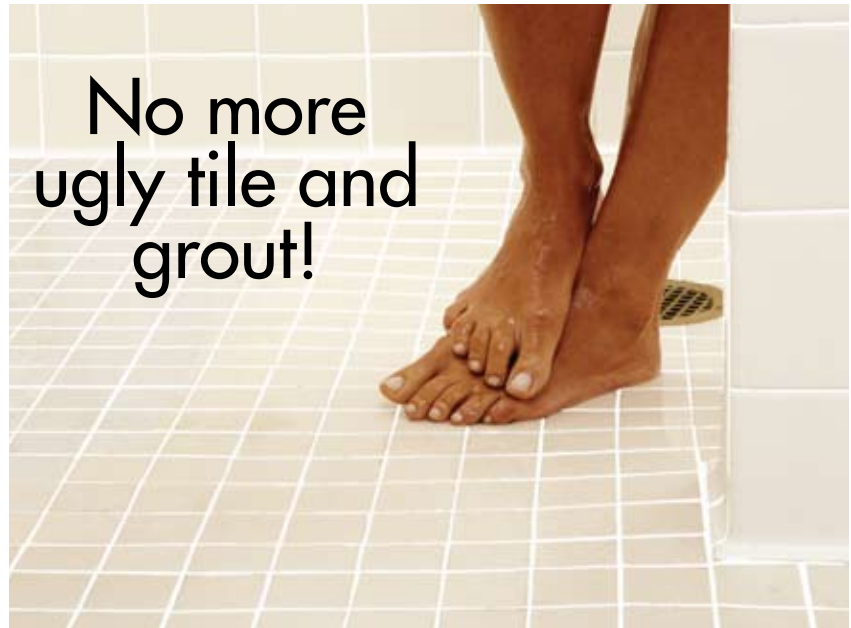
This initiative is an example of how the National Technology Transfer Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-113) can be put in service for our industry. This law promotes the development of new industrial and technology standards by requiring that all federal agencies use privately developed standards. APPA's Code Advisory Task Force anticipates that this standard would be a document that would be used by the U.S. Department of Education, individual state education agencies, and thousands of local school districts.

Exceptional enterprises know they must seek partnerships in order to accelerate the growth and enhance the competitiveness of its members. The initiative by the Code Advisory Task Force will help all stakeholders in the education facilities industry to seek value in existing leading practices, to inspire questions and answers, and to

create receptivity to new ideas about the future. ☺

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