



SOP TITLE	Control of TNI Documents
SOP NO.	1-104
REVISION NO	2.1
PROGRAM	Administration

SOP Approval Dates

	Initial Approval	Last Revision Date	Last Review Date
Committee: Policy	12/5/2008	7/14/2017	
Program	NA	NA	
Policy Committee Review	NA	NA	
TNI Board of Directors Endorsement	12/10/2008	12/13/2017	
SOP Effective Date	4/1/2009	12/13/2017	

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1.0 Purpose and Applicability

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes procedures for the custody and control of TNI documents. The SOP addresses processes for managing documents, including their retention, access, storage, and disposal.

This SOP applies to all TNI committees, TNI Board of Directors, subcommittees, work groups, and task groups and covers the following types of documents, among others:

- Policies, SOPs, guidance and other documents published by TNI in hard copy, electronically, or posted on TNI's Website.
- Standard Interpretation Requests (SIRs).
- Preliminary drafts of documents created by committees.
- Records associated with the evaluation of Accreditation Bodies (ABs) and Proficiency Testing Provider Accreditors (PTPAs) recognized by TNI.
- Tables or lists describing fields of proficiency testing (FoPT), method codes, and acceptance ranges.
- TNI consensus Standards, including Interim Standards, and Voting Drafts of Standards.
- Records associated with business confidential information, personnel transactions, and records generated during closed committee or board sessions.

This SOP does not apply to electronic mail messages.

2.0 Summary

This SOP defines classification of documents controlled by TNI into five classes, depending on their level of dissemination, publication status, retention period, and availability. The SOP specifies procedures for custody and control of documents, their access, and storage. The SOP addresses document revisions, disposal, and withdrawal.

3.0 Related Documents

- 3.1 POL 1-104, Management of Records
- 3.2 SOP 1-100, Format Guidelines for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of The NELAC Institute (TNI)
- 3.3 SOP 1-116, Development and Approval of TNI Policies and SOPs
- 3.5 SOP 1-115, TNI Newsletter Preparation and Distribution
- 3.6 SOP 1-118, Developing Position Statements
- 3.7 SOP 1-105, Process for Creating Guidance
- 3.8 SOP 2-100, Procedures Governing Standards Development

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 **Controlled document:** Any TNI document necessary to perform an activity effectively or to ensure that customer and stakeholder requirements are met, including but not necessarily limited to any document intended for public dissemination created or commissioned by a TNI committee or board, a working draft of a document intended for public dissemination, or a document that is necessary to recreate a TNI official activity or proceeding.

Note: Examples of controlled documents are consensus Standards, TNI policies, SOPs, guidance, meeting minutes, committee charters, and tables of proficiency testing acceptance ranges.

- 4.2 Document class: Any of five tiers to which a controlled document is assigned based on its importance, dissemination, applicability, and need for permanence.
- 4.3 Record: A paper or electronic document, or a collection of documents.
- 4.4 Restricted: An access mode of some TNI documents limited to designated TNI members, or to the general public after redaction of selected sensitive information by the Secretary.
- 4.5 Uncontrolled document: Any TNI document that is not a controlled document, including, but not necessarily limited to documents created by an individual, a TNI committee, the Board of Directors or TNI staff whose principal purpose is to facilitate day-to-day operations, is generated as part of conducting recurring committee and board business, and that is not critical for reconstructing a past activity or to interpret an existing controlled document.

Note: Examples of uncontrolled documents include but are not limited to messages reminding members of upcoming meetings, brochures advertising TNI events, notes conveying instructions for performing a specific clerical task, and letters of appreciation received by a committee chair.

5.0 Classes of Documents

- 5.1 TNI documents are either controlled or uncontrolled. When there is doubt as to the control status of a document, the TNI Secretary (See Article VI, Section 6 of the TNI Bylaws) shall have the authority to assign the document to a category.
- 5.2 Controlled documents are assigned into five tiered classes:
 - 5.2.1 **Class I** documents are final versions of consensus Standards, Voting and Interim draft Standards and historical Working draft Standards prior to adoption of Revision 2 of the Consensus Standards Development SOP 2-100 (April 8, 2015)
 - 5.2.2 **Class II** documents are normative, or are supplementary to Class I documents, or help implement, understand, or interpret them, and may undergo endorsement involving entities beyond the documents' creators. Typical Class II documents are policies, SOPs, bylaws, Standard Interpretations, guidance, templates, vote tallies, and responses to comments issued with votes on standards. Class II documents also include but are not limited to documents generated by the Advocacy committee or TNI's Executive Director such as:
 - Articles,
 - Press Releases,
 - Public Comments,
 - White Papers,
 - Position Statements and
 - Reports
 - 5.2.3 **Class III** documents reconstruct or relate TNI meetings or proceedings, or are documents administrative in nature, and are not generally approved or endorsed by entities beyond their authors or relevant committees. Typical Class III documents are meeting minutes, proceedings of symposia and forums, application forms and FoPTs.
 - 5.2.4 **Class IV** documents are committee or board drafts of Class I and Class II documents that have not been designated final. Class IV documents are used by committees and staff to create or arrive at what may become Class I or Class II documents.
 - 5.2.5 **Class V** documents are associated with personnel, financial matters, contractual obligations, assistance agreements, and records associated with evaluations of ABs and PTPAs. Some Class V documents are designated confidential. Confidential Class V documents include, but are not limited to:
 - Business records dealing with contractual agreements.
 - Records documenting TNI personnel transactions.
 - Records generated during closed sessions of committee or program meetings.
 - Membership information contained in TNI databases.

6.0 Custody and Control of Documents

- 6.1 The TNI Secretary is the official custodian of all final TNI controlled documents and is responsible for their management. The Secretary may delegate their custody to individuals within programs, such as the TNI Executive Director, TNI Program Administrators, or Committee Chairs.
- 6.2 The TNI Secretary ensures that all TNI committees and the Board have systems that facilitate compliance with this SOP.
- 6.3 The TNI Secretary shall prepare and maintain current a list of all Class I and Class II TNI controlled documents. The list shall include, as necessary, a clear identifier, review date and the issue or effective date of all controlled documents
- 6.4 All Class III, IV and V documents are managed through TNI's Content Management System, archived as hard copy or archived in a secure cloud-based system.
 - 6.4.1 The TNI Secretary shall ensure that a copy of each obsolete controlled document is retained to provide a historical reconstruction of a document's revisions and amendments in a secure cloud storage environment. Obsolete documents are not posted on the TNI Website, but may be available by request.
- 6.5 TNI committees and staff shall ensure that obsolete controlled documents are not supplied to members and the public except by an expressed request. Any copies retained by TNI of obsolete versions of controlled documents shall be identified accordingly.
- 6.6 TNI staff and committees shall ensure that different versions of controlled documents are readily identifiable and distribute or publish only the latest approved version. Controlled documents in electronic format shall have unique file designations.
 - 6.6.1 SOPs shall follow the control documentation requirements specified in the current revision of SOP 1-100 and the file naming convention in SOP 1-116.
 - 6.6.2 Class II documents shall include a date and revision number (e.g., xxxxx-1-31-11-Rev1).
 - 6.6.3 Class III documents shall, at minimum, have a unique file name.
 - 6.6.4 Class IV documents shall have a unique file name and be retained in a secure cloud storage environment.
 - 6.6.5 Class V documents are to be saved or stored, in hard copy or electronic version, in a secure and retrievable environment.

7.0 Access and Storage

- 7.1 TNI provides universal access to all documents posted on its website, except for those documents that are available to members only, or those sold for a fee.
- 7.2 Requests for documents not available on TNI's Website shall be directed to the Secretary.
 - 7.2.1 The Secretary or designee shall determine whether the requested document can be supplied or whether it is restricted or confidential.
 - 7.2.2 The Secretary or designee shall supply requested non-confidential documents or direct the requestor as soon as practical to a source for their access.
 - 7.2.3 Access to non-confidential original documents in hard copy may require special arrangements for their review. TNI may charge a fee for providing copies of original hard copy non-confidential documents.
 - 7.2.4 No committee, board or TNI group may use the exemptions granted in this SOP to avoid access to any document that should otherwise be legitimately available.
- 7.3 TNI archives most of its records in electronic format in a secure electronic environment by the TNI Webmaster.
- 7.4 TNI's hard copy records are stored in a secure, retrievable location, protected from deterioration.

8.0 Retention Time Period of Documents

- 8.1 TNI controlled documents are assigned a retention time period commensurate with their importance, applicability, usage, and coverage by regulations. The retention time period of TNI documents in common usage is specified in Appendix A, Specifications for TNI Controlled Documents. Controlled documents not included in the published list will be retained for a minimum of two years.

- 8.2 The previous version of a controlled document that is revised before its retention time expires shall be placed in archive for at least three years or until its original retention time expires, whichever is longer.
- 8.3 The TNI Secretary may extend the retention time of any controlled document beyond the minimum included in the published list.

9.0 Access Mode and Availability of Documents

- 9.1 TNI documents that are not confidential are typically accessible through the TNI Website or requests made to the Secretary, or designee. Some documents will be available universally, while others may be only available to members, or specific committee members and board directors. Appendix A, Specifications for TNI Controlled Documents, indicates the access mode for and availability of controlled documents in common usage. Controlled documents not included in the list may be available by request to the Secretary, or designee.
- 9.2 Uncontrolled documents are not assigned a retention time period, but if available, may be provided to a requester by the TNI Secretary, or designee.
- 9.3 The TNI Secretary may request changing the status of an uncontrolled document to controlled and may request retaining specific uncontrolled documents.

10.0 Revision, Withdrawal, and Disposal of Documents

- 10.1 Creators or final endorsers of controlled documents are responsible for notifying the Secretary or designee of their revision or withdrawal.
- 10.2 Creators of controlled documents are responsible for retaining former versions of revised or withdrawn documents in accordance with Appendix A, Specifications for TNI Controlled Documents.
- 10.3 The TNI Secretary may dispose or direct the disposal of controlled documents that have exceeded their retention time period and notify the respective party prior to removal.
- 10.4 TNI committees and staff may dispose of uncontrolled documents unless they are notified by the TNI Secretary to retain a specific uncontrolled document.

11.0 SOP Approved Changes

Revision No.	Effective Date	Description of Change
0.1	4/1/2009	Update to new format
1.0	10/5/2012	Added SIRs to list of Class II documents; minor editorial changes and inclusion of Specifications for TNI Controlled Documents as Appendix A
2.0	7/24/2017	Update due to 5-year review and adoption of TNI QMP. Revised Section 5.2.2 to include Advocacy documents.
2.1	12/13/2017	Minor editorial revisions from the TNI Board

Control of TNI Documents

Appendix A

Specifications for TNI Controlled Documents

Document Class	Type of Document	Retention Time Minimum	Access Mode	Availability
Class I				
	Final versions of Standards	Until revised or withdrawn, then 5 years after last use by an AB	Website	Universal
	Final versions of Standards, including Working and Voting drafts, with material copyrighted by an entity other than TNI	Until five years after last use by an AB	By subscription	Universal
Class II				
	“Response to Comments” documents [addressing comments received when voting on Standards]	For the life of the associated version of a Standard. Retained for five years after the corresponding version of a Standard has been revised	Website	Universal
	Proficiency Testing (PT) Program Tables [describing fields of proficiency testing, method codes, and acceptance limits for PT samples]	Until revised. When revised, previous version is retained for five years	Website	Universal
	“Interpretation of Standards” documents [Endorsed interpretations to TNI Standards]	Retain for 5 years after last use of relevant Standard by ABs	Website	Universal
	Bylaws	Until revised. When revised, previous version is retained for five years	Website for current; offline for previous versions	Universal
	Committee charters, Policies, SOPs, Advocacy documents	Until revised. When revised, previous version is retained for three years	Website	Universal

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Document Class	Type of Document	Retention Time Minimum	Access Mode	Availability
	Guidance, templates, manuals, and checklists	When revised or withdrawn, previous version is retained for three years after last use of version by an AB	Website or by subscription	Universal
	Application forms	When revised, previous version is retained for three years	Offline	Universal
Class III				
	Meeting minutes for all TNI programs, except the Consensus Standards Development Program (CSDP)	Three years	Website	Universal
	Meeting minutes for the CSDP	Five years after last use of a particular standard	Website	Universal
	Proceedings of and presentations made at TNI symposia and forums	Ten years	Website	Universal
Class IV				
	Committee drafts of Class I documents	Until corresponding voting draft becomes a Standard	By request	Universal
	Committee and board drafts of Class II documents	Until draft becomes final (at which point they are no longer Class IV)	Restricted	Committee members, board directors, and designated affiliates or associates
Class V				
	Annual Report	Three years	Website	Universal
	Annual Budget	Three years	Restricted	TNI Board, institutions requiring disclosure, and others as determined by the Secretary
	Financial Statements	As required by Internal Revenue Service	Restricted	TNI Board, institutions requiring disclosure, and

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Document Class	Type of Document	Retention Time Minimum	Access Mode	Availability
				others as determined by the Secretary
	Assistance agreements	Five years or as required by awarding institution, whichever is longer	Restricted	TNI Board, institutions requiring disclosure, and others as determined by the TNI Secretary
	Contractual agreements with service providers	Five years	Confidential	Executive Director, TNI Board of Directors
	Personnel files and performance evaluation records	Five years	Confidential	Executive Director, TNI Board of Directors
	Proceedings of closed committee and board sessions	Three years	Confidential	Committee or board members in closed session; TNI Board of Directors
	Completed applications to TNI committees and boards	Three years	Restricted	Committee members and board directors
	Completed AB applications	Five years	By request	Universal except information claimed confidential will not be made available
	Final evaluation reports, responses and recommendations for ABs	Five years	By request	Universal except information claimed confidential will not be made available
	General TNI business correspondence not already identified as Class V documents	Three years	By request	Universal