

Background: As the technical contact for a ballot item, you will sometimes receive a negative vote. This negative vote stops the process until it is resolved. There are several ways to resolve a negative vote which will not be addressed here (see balloting and handling negative votes training) but here are some tips for how to handle your call to a negative voter.

**Please note this is only guidance and all actions taken must comply with the ASTM Regulations*

Contacting the Negative Voter

Prior to contacting the voter:

- Review the negative in detail and develop your thoughts for each point. Be sure to note the ballot and item number (ex. D18 (18-01) Item 3 for standard D422).
- Determine if the negative voter attended the most recent meeting; were they present at the task group meeting to hear and participate in the discussions surrounding the development or revision of the standard? If the answer is no, be prepared to provide insight to give context to the ballot item.
- Identify areas where you may agree with the voter and confirm with staff if any of the items can be handled editorially.
- If needed, contact your staff manager so you have a full understanding of the process and your intended outcome is keeping with the “spirit of the regulations”.

Contacting the voter:

- Introduce yourself using the committee office you are representing i.e. task group chairman, technical contact or subcommittee chairman and explain the purpose of your communication “I’m calling to discuss the negative vote that you submitted on ballot ____ for standard ____.”
- If the negative voter did not attend recent meetings, summarize the meeting discussions and provide as much background as possible. Discuss your thoughts on their negative, both those you disagree and agree with. See if you can come to an agreement for moving forward (ex. The negative voter agrees to withdrawal). If you cannot reach agreement, inform the voter of your intentions for discussing this at the next meeting (provide the meeting date if possible).

How strong to come on:

You should have an ideal resolution in your mind before calling, so start with that and include all of the other details.

Be professional. You don't need to come on very strong, as sometimes the voters will appreciate your call/explanations and will withdraw their negative vote. Of course, there are times that you will agree to disagree and will need to bring the negative before the rest of the committee for a vote resolution.

Remember, you're providing additional technical information or insight from meeting discussions centered on the technical/scientific aspects of the document. It is always about the document, not about the voter themselves.

How to ask for the withdrawal of the negative vote

"Given the additional information I've provided during our conversation, are you willing to withdraw your negative vote?"

"The ideas/comments you've provided are outside the scope of this activity. Would you be willing to serve as the technical contact for a new ballot item or standard activity once this item is approved?"

"Your comments on section ____ can be handled editorially. Do you agree to withdraw with the following rewording _____?"