

Third Edition

Digging Deeper into the Broader Perspective

Why ANSI?

Up to this point, our Third Edition articles and discussions have focused on specific portions of the standard and on the technical aspects of the document.

In this edition, we would like to step back just a bit and take a broader look at ANSI/UL 1449-2006. One question that needs to be asked is: 'Why ANSI?'

The short answer is that it's all about the globe. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI), according to their mission statement, was founded in 1918 for the purpose of enhancing both the global competitiveness of U.S. business and the U.S. quality of life. It accomplishes this by promoting and facilitating voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment systems; as well as, to safeguard the integrity of these standards and systems. In short, ANSI is the "voice" of the U.S. standards and conformity assessment system. As such, it empowers its members to strengthen the U.S. marketplace position in the global economy while helping to assure the safety and health of consumers and the protection of the environment. ANSI oversees the creation, promulgation and use of thousands of norms and guidelines that directly impact businesses in nearly every industry sector. This includes the Surge Protective Device industry.

There are several IEEE, NEMA and UL standards which are also ANSI standards. Many of these standards relate to various aspects of surge protection and the surge environment itself.

Why is this important as it relates to ANSI/UL 1449? First of all, ANSI has strict guidelines regarding the balance of standards development body, in this case, the UL STP (Standards Technical Panel). Participants include producers, users, regulatory agencies and general interest participants. Secondly, while the U.S. is a participant and member of the IEC, the IEC standards are performance and test standards as well as application documents while the UL standard is specifically developed as a safety certification document. Moreover, as stated previously, having the ANSI/UL 1449-2006 (Third Edition) assists in the global promotion and provision of the U.S. Standard based industries. ANSI/UL 1449-2006 is well recognized in international communities as the premier standard for these devices. As an American industry, this is beneficial as well as necessary.