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# Technical Bulletin 2000-1: Purpose and Scope of FASAB Technical Bulletins and Procedures for Issuance

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1. On October 19, 1999, the Council of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) adopted an amendment to Rule 203 of the AICPA's Code of Professional Ethics. This amendment recognized accounting standards published by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board as generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for federal financial reporting entities. The amendment recognized FASAB as the source of GAAP for federal entities. Consequently, the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board has authorized its staff to prepare FASAB Technical Bulletins to provide timely guidance on certain financial accounting and reporting problems of federal financial reporting entities. This Bulletin describes the purpose and scope of FASAB Technical Bulletins, the procedures for issuing them, and related background information.
2. The FASAB anticipates that it will communicate primarily through the issuance of Statements and Interpretations. Such pronouncements may require extensive due process, including appointing task forces and holding public hearings. The FASAB also recognizes the need for providing timely guidance to financial statement preparers and attestors for both currently emerging and existing problems.
3. To provide timely guidance within the context of the standard FASAB procedures, Technical Bulletin procedures provide for both due process (more limited in scope and within a tighter minimum time frame than provided for Statements and Interpretations) and review by FASAB members.
4. FASAB Technical Bulletins provide guidance for applying FASAB Statements and Interpretations and resolving accounting issues not directly addressed by them. The following kinds of guidance may be provided in a Technical Bulletin:
  - a. Guidance to clarify, explain, or elaborate on an underlying Statement or Interpretation,
  - b. Guidance to address areas not directly covered by existing Statements or Interpretations,
  - c. Interim guidance on problems in applying an existing Statement or Interpretation currently under study by the FASAB, or
  - d. If applicable, guidance for applying FASB or GASB standards to federal activities.
5. The FASAB staff analyzes an accounting or reporting problem that comes to the FASAB's attention to determine whether the problem may be resolved by issuing a FASAB Technical Bulletin. Generally, a Technical Bulletin can provide guidance if the problem can be resolved within the following guidelines:
  - a. The guidance is not expected to cause a major change in accounting practice.

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- b. The administrative cost involved in implementing the guidance is not expected to be significant to most affected entities.
  - c. The guidance does not conflict with a broad fundamental principle or create a novel accounting practice.

Generally, a FASAB Statement or Interpretation is more appropriate than a Technical Bulletin if any of these guidelines is not met.

- 6. FASAB members will be provided with copies of all draft Technical Bulletins before their release for comment by interested parties. Within 15 days of sending the draft TB to FASAB members, the Executive Director will review any member comments and consult with members on any issues identified. Based on the comments and consultation, the Executive Director will determine if a majority of members do not object to the proposed Technical Bulletin.
- 7. If a majority of the FASAB members do not object, the Executive Director will release the proposed Technical Bulletin to selected knowledgeable persons for comment. Those persons include members of the CFO Council, the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program, CPA firms, and others the Executive Director and members of FASAB believe should be consulted. Proposed Bulletins will be publicized by electronic communication with interested parties and by posting to FASAB's World Wide Web site during an exposure period of at least 15 days.<sup>1</sup> The FASAB will maintain a public record of proposed Bulletins and all written comments received. The public record will be available for inspection at the FASAB's offices.
- 8. All comments received on draft Technical Bulletins will be given to the Board for its consideration at a public meeting before final issuance. A Bulletin will not be issued if a majority of the FASAB members object either to the guidance in it or to communicating that guidance in a Technical Bulletin.
- 9. The FASAB may support use of a Technical Bulletin because the nature of the accounting issue addressed and the guidance provided do not, in its judgment, warrant more extensive due process. If the appropriateness of issuing a Technical Bulletin is in doubt, the FASAB may choose instead to issue a Statement or Interpretation or take other action as it deems appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup>Determination of the length of the exposure period will depend on the nature and urgency of the issue. The Board generally prefers that exposure periods be longer than the minimum required and expects that normally exposure periods will be for at least 30 days.

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10. Each Technical Bulletin will specify an effective date and transition provisions for initial application. While the FASAB expects that most Technical Bulletins will be applied prospectively, Technical Bulletins may require retroactive application if appropriate in the circumstances.
  11. The FASAB monitors the procedures for issuing FASAB Technical Bulletins and may modify these procedures from time to time. Any modification will be announced publicly.
  12. FASAB Technical Bulletins are generally in question-and-answer format and are published with this legend:

The Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board has authorized its staff to prepare FASAB Technical Bulletins to provide timely guidance on certain financial accounting and reporting problems, in accordance with section III. I. 5 of the Board's rules of procedure, as amended and restated through October 1, 1999 and the procedures described in FASAB Technical Bulletin 2000-1, Purpose and Scope of FASAB Technical Bulletins and Procedures for Issuance. The provisions of Technical Bulletins need not be applied to immaterial items.

The FASAB has reviewed this Technical Bulletin and a majority of its members do not object to its issuance.