

MHA Technical Committee Conference Call Draft Discussion Outline  
January 2, 2008

This is a draft outline of the discussions of this conference call. These are not minutes since no official business was done (no motions made or votes taken.) The conference call of the Technical Committee had the participation of Jerry Frisch, Dan Givens, Timothy Seaton, Ken Matesz, Brad Palmer, and Rod Zander. The phone conference began at 1:00 p.m. Eastern time. The only agenda item for the conference was the “white paper” written by Bob Ferguson. The intention of the meeting was to find if there were any significant objections or problems with the paper as written. Mr. Ferguson has requested feedback from all stakeholders by January 4, 2008.

Rod Zander began by affirming the additional information obtained from Heinz Flurer regarding testing of the Biofire product. Additional information is also available from Kivia.

Timothy Seaton asked Jerry Frisch to suggest any other data that might exist that has not yet been accessed. Mr. Frisch said he could not think of any other existing data that could be added. Timothy suggested the Crossfire but stated he didn’t believe any testing had been done on it.

Mr. Zander asked if there were any points about the paper that raised questions or objections:

Mr. Frisch stated that he was certain that Paul Tiegs would take issue with the stated definition of masonry heaters – that it should be made more “bulletproof” by perhaps adding information present in some of the European definitions, such as provisions for certain surface temperatures combined with duration of time that the heat is stored/released.

Mr. Seaton stated that the definition in the white paper has been satisfactory in Washington State. Right now the EPA has “left the door open for us” to get class recognition. The EPA is ready to give us that because it wants to move on to other things with more impact than 600-1000 masonry heaters.

Mr. Frisch argued that the definition could be said to include regular fireplaces that make use of a single short downdraft. He added that Paul Tiegs recommends a tighter definition.

Mr. Seaton restated that the white paper is about emissions and not about heating efficiency. If a “regular” fireplace built to this definition burns cleanly, nothing is lost. Future events might require us to tighten the definition to include heating efficiency.

Mr. Zander commented that the issue right now is “the lowest common denominator.” We want to outline basic statements that assure meeting emissions standards for our class. If we have problems later caused by this definition, we’ll tighten it, but right now it seems it is not necessary.

Mr. Seaton stated that Deputy Director Greene at the EPA has been expecting the white paper even months ago. They want to get us out of the way. Even the Bay area is currently writing masonry heaters

into their regulations based on the definition in the current white paper. Also, HPBA maintains this interest because having a clean burning product (beside woodstoves) can open the doors for other interests. Mr. Seaton asked Mr. Frisch if he had any other objections to the paper to which Mr. Frisch said, "No." Mr. Frisch affirmed that he was willing to send it to EPA as is.

Ken Matesz raised a possible issue with the way the paper outlines conformance criteria. He questioned the process, time, and expense required to get a third-party to affirm that a given design is really a masonry heater when trying to design for a client and supply pricing.

Mr. Seaton suggested that although initially that could be cumbersome, it is much less a problem than the potential alternative that each heater be tested before or after it is built.

Mr. Zander outlined the general process in Europe – submitting a design which is then examined to verify that it fits the necessary parameter before it is approved. He suggested this might be a one or two week process.

Brad Palmer stated that his training is that technical writing should be writing that anyone can read and understand. He thinks the format of the white paper leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions from the test data. Not everyone can interpret this data. Also, good technical writing references its sources in the body of the text while this paper only references some of the attachments.

Mr. Zander encouraged Mr. Palmer to write an example of what could be added and send it to Mr. Ferguson. Mr. Palmer said he would do so. Mr. Zander also mentioned that he had suggested already to Mr. Ferguson the addition of a table of contents and/or a bibliography format.

Mr. Palmer also questioned whether the test data should be called attachments or appendices. Mr. Zander stated that he believed that anything that was done to make the document more professional-looking could only be a benefit. Tables, footnotes, and conclusions could help it be more professional. Mr. Palmer also mentioned grammatical errors in the first five pages and Mr. Zander suggested he send those corrections directly to Mr. Ferguson.

Dan Givens suggested that simply having one sentence conclusions may be all that is necessary to help the reader understand the data.

Mr. Palmer stated his limited current understanding of heaters may limit his ability to write conclusions. Mr. Zander again suggested he write what he thinks may be appropriate and send to Mr. Ferguson and copy to Mr. Zander and Mr. Seaton. Mr. Givens said he would get a copy through Mr. Seaton.

The group was asked by Mr. Zander if there were any other concerns. No one added additional items.

The conference ended at 1:45 p.m.

