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- Allied Stone Industries
 - Building Stone Institute
 - Elberton Granite Association
 - Indiana Limestone Institute
 - Marble Institute of America
 - Mason Contractors Association of America
 - National Building Granite Quarries Association
 - National Slate Association
 - Natural Stone Alliance
 - New York State Bluestone Association
 - Northwest Granite Manufacturers Association
 - Pennsylvania Bluestone Association

**NEW
SUSTAINABILITY
STANDARDS
ARE SET IN STONE**

*An introduction to ANSI/NSC373
Sustainability Assessment for
Natural Dimension Stone*

Gold

Platinum

Silver

Bronze



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*Sustainable Production of
Natural Dimension Stone*

Natural Stone: A Building Material for the Ages

As you travel around the world and view natural stone buildings that have endured for hundreds of years, why would anyone question the sustainability of man's oldest building material? Ever since man evolved from caves and began building, before even the first architectural design, the use of natural stone has been a constant. For thousands of years, natural stone's durability and sustainability have been taken for granted.

But today, sustainability means more than just having a long and useful lifespan, even though that is still important. Accounting for the sustainability of natural stone now encompasses how the stone is quarried, processed and transported. How natural stone is used impacts the facilities, environments and people who work within them. The entire process of determining a product's sustainability is part of a growing and global green building movement.



Natural Stone Council Takes the Lead

The Natural Stone Council recognized that the stone industry needed a set of sustainability standards that would level the playing field between natural stone and other competing building materials, and it has been a five year effort to get to this point. The organization, composed of 12 representative affiliate associations in the stone industry, launched an aggressive program to create ANSI/NSC 373 – Sustainability Assessment for Natural Dimension Stone, a wide-ranging standard that documents the sustainable production of natural dimension stone through its life cycle. The end product is a standard aimed at recognizing and promoting existing sustainability practices within the industry.

ANSI/NSC 373 establishes well defined metrics for environmental, economic and social responsibilities. It was designed to be recognized by green building market drivers as indicators of leadership in sustainability performance.

More importantly, this carefully constructed standard is scalable. It creates a rating system that differentiates natural stone companies who demonstrate environmental leadership through a commitment to sustainable operations and continued innovation.

The new standard adds mightily to the significant benefits of natural stone, which includes its beauty, durability, versatility, long life cycle and the fact that it does not off gas.

While admittedly the stone industry was slow to react to the onset of the green movement, the new standard was carefully crafted to get the story right the first time by a team of industry experts, NSF International of Ann Arbor, Michigan and Ecoform of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Exclusively Awarded by NSC

Fabricator Seals



Quarrier Seals



The Facts About ANSI/NSC373

The standard covers nine facets of a quarry and fabricator's operation with an optional element called innovation. The nine required facets include water usage and recycling, custody and transportation, site and plant management, land reclamation and adaptive use, corporate governance, energy usage and conservation, management of excess process materials and waste, safer chemical and materials management, and lastly human and health considerations.

Each company facility is certified on a site-specific basis. For instance, if a company has a dozen quarries, it can obtain certification on a site-specific basis, one or all twelve. The same goes for fabrication plants.

All told, there are 18 different requirements under the ANSI/NSC 373 standard and a total of 41 possible points. There are four different levels of certification for quarries and fabrication facilities – bronze, silver, gold and platinum.

By achieving the basic standard, a quarry or fabrication facility would achieve bronze level certification. Starting with that baseline, additional points can be accumulated by demonstrating compliance to the different criteria, which is audited by a third-party certifier and if it wants to display the seal for its level of certification, it can choose NSF International as the third-party certifier. It is simple. The more points the company earns on the way to a maximum of 41, the higher the level distinction.

Manage water recycling and energy usage better and earn more points. Improve safety compliance, keep better transportation records or rack up a better performance in other areas and the points total goes higher.

Once a quarry or fabricating plant achieves bronze, silver, gold or platinum status, the company can use the designation in its marketing efforts and as noted previously apply appropriate seals to individual slabs and blocks.

There is also an important supporting document to ANSI/NSC 373 – NSC Chain of Custody, which tracks the pathway of the stone as the material moves from quarry to manufacturing and through the supply chain to its ultimate destination, including the job site or the end user. Every step of the way, whoever is handling the product, must conform to the standard, or it loses its certification.

Bottom Line: How it All Affects the Environment

In the end, the standard was built to assure an architect, designer, owner or consumer that the stone that's being bought from next door, across the country or across the ocean is coming in a manner that minimizes how it affects the environment and human health. It was not an easy task. It was complicated considering the wide diversity in stone types, in the sizes of companies in the industry and the types of entities that make up the business – quarries, fabricators, distribution and delivery.

The standard address a very large spectrum of stone species ranging from marble, granite, limestone, blue-stone and travertine to sandstone, slate, rubble stone and others. That is a very large spectrum of material created naturally, Genuine Stone®.

Rome Wasn't Built in a Day. Certification Will Take Time.

The new standard is detailed and all-encompassing. The criteria were conceived with the promise of providing architects, designers, owners, contractors and consumers with indisputable proof of natural dimension stone's sustainability.

The race for certification to ANSI/NSC 373 is on, with a competitive advantage surely accruing to those stone quarries, fabricators and distributors, who embrace the new standard, achieve certification and the right to put bronze, silver, gold and or platinum seals on their products and in their literature. It will take some time, but everyone knows Rome was not built in a day. NSC certified Genuine Stone® is here to stay. Talk to your stone suppliers or fabricators about their plans for certification and how you can learn more about this most important new sustainability standard in the stone industry. Or contact the Natural Stone Council for information on training programs which describe the new standard in more detail.



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