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**Guidelines for Developing and  
Revising SAE Nomenclature  
and Definitions—SAE J1115**

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**THIS IS A PREPRINT AND WILL  
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OF THE SAE HANDBOOK**

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# GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING AND REVISING SAE NOMENCLATURE AND DEFINITIONS—SAE J1115

## SAE Information Report

Report of Nomenclature Advisory Committee of SAE Automotive Council approved June 1975. Editorial change February 1976.

**Introduction**—Historically SAE has been concerned with nomenclature as an integral part of the standards development process. Guidelines for automotive nomenclature were written in 1916, were last revised in 1941, and were included in the SAE Handbook until 1962. The present diversity of groups working on nomenclature in the various ground vehicle committees led to the organization of the Nomenclature Advisory Committee under SAE Automotive Council.

**Objective**—The objective of the Committee is to promote understandable and precise communication relating to the engineering aspects of on-highway vehicles, their components, their design, and their evaluation. In order to reach this objective, the Committee is primarily concerned with the definition or redefinition of needed terms considering (a) current usage, (b) changing needs, and (c) the interactive use of a particular term by various SAE committees, government agencies, and other national and international organizations. In order to facilitate and encourage the use of generally accepted terminology by SAE committees and other organizations, the Nomenclature Advisory Committee plans to prepare and maintain a glossary of terms appearing in SAE technical reports.

**Guidelines**—Since the basic approach of the Committee is one of advice and coordination, the following guidelines for developing and revising SAE nomenclature and definitions are recommended:

1. Before developing and revising nomenclature, check for similar terms already defined in existing SAE Standards, Recommended Practices, and Information Reports and in Federal motor vehicle standards, in order to minimize duplication, to avoid conflict, and to achieve uniformity of format. In addition to the SAE Handbook, consult the following SAE and DOT reports:

Vehicle Dynamics Terminology, SAE J670d

Seating Manual, SAE J782a

Motor Vehicle Dimensions, SAE J1100a

Recommendations for Writing SAE Technical Reports

49 CFR 571.3 and appropriate FMVSS

2. If dictionary definitions of common generic terms can be used, they need not be included in nomenclature listings; for example, "Acceleration."

3. Develop general definitions for general terms; for example, define "Fully Latched" generically and not specifically as applied to doors, hoods or trunk lids. General definitions must be valid for all possible situations or contingencies, not just for the situation under immediate consideration.

4. Specific concepts or components should be identified by correspondingly specific terms when defined in a document, so that these terms can stand alone when extracted from that document and integrated with other terms in a glossary. For example, use "Tire Valve Core" rather than "Core" alone, so

that the term will not be confused with another type of core, such as "Radiator Core."

5. The abbreviation for a defined term, when included, should follow it and be placed in parentheses; for example, "Decibel (dB)."

6. Terminology should follow normal word order; for example, use "Lighting Device," not "Device, Lighting," and "Brake Cylinder," not "Cylinder (Brake)." The glossary will index the defined term under each significant word in that term. For example, "Accelerator Heel Point" will appear in the index in the following permuted forms:

Accelerator Heel Point

Heel Point, Accelerator

Point, Accelerator Heel

7. Term definitions should be directed at concise statements of the items being defined, rather than at specifications, performance requirements, or test procedures. As an example, the following description includes both a definition and a test procedure:

Windshield Slope Angle—the angle between the vertical reference line and a chord of the windshield arc running from the lower DLO to the upper DLO at the car centerline, when such chord is no longer than 18.0 in. If the windshield is longer than 18.0 in, the angle to be measured will be formed by a chord 18.0 in long, drawn from the lower DLO to the intersecting point on the windshield.

8. The opposite of a term already defined within a document need not also be defined; for example, the definition of "Asymmetrical Beam" is implied by the definition of "Symmetrical Beam."

9. Nomenclature which refers to a diagram should have a sufficient written definition to make the term understandable without the diagram.

10. Explanatory or historical notes should be stated separately from and should follow the base definition and be so identified. The following example illustrates this usage:

Static Loaded Tire Radius—the loaded radius of a stationary tire inflated to normal recommended pressure.

Note: In general, the static loaded radius is different from the radius of a slowly rolling tire; and the static radius of a tire rolled into position may be different from that of a tire loaded without being rolled.

11. When two or more terms have the same definition and are used interchangeably, a preferred term should be chosen and defined. Synonymous terms may also be listed but with only a reference to the preferred item term. Example:

Barrel Gasket—the cylindrical sleeve of rubber-like material, etc.

Barrel Seal—use Barrel Gasket.

12. Definitions should be clear and useful to all who use the SAE Handbook as an engineering or technical reference.