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# Durable Hardcover Binding for Books

**Abstract:** This standard establishes specifications for durable hardcover binding for books. The methods and materials described are compatible with what can be efficiently produced in a modern book manufacturing facility. Included in the standard are specifications for such aspects of book manufacturing as grain direction of paper, width of the inner margins, attachment of the pages, preparation of the spine, construction of the case, and selection of materials.

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**An American National Standard  
Developed by the  
National Information Standards Organization  
Approved February 28, 1992 by the  
American National Standards Institute**

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Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.A.

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## Foreword

(This foreword is not part of American National Standard ANSI/NISO Z39.66-1992, but is included for information only.)

In August 1986, the National Information Standards Organization established Standards Committee GG to develop a standard for durable hardcover binding for books. The work of the Committee evolved from concerns regarding the durability of modern bindings as expressed by individuals in the library and publishing communities. The libraries that expend substantial resources to purchase books and make them available to readers are obvious beneficiaries of this standard. The Committee also affirms the importance of this standard to the reading public.

In developing this standard, the Committee relied heavily on the standards and specifications developed for the manufacture of textbooks by the National Association of State Textbook Administrators in consultation with the Association of American Publishers and the Book Manufacturers Institute and also on the standard developed by the Library Binding Institute, the trade association of companies that provide bookbinding services for libraries.

In considering specifications for a durable binding, the Committee discussed at length the issue of adhesive binding. While current adhesive binding technology has vastly improved over earlier methods, the results of testing for durability are not conclusive. Thus the standard specifies that pages be attached by sewing through the folds of signatures.

The Committee recognizes that there are some materials (such as textbooks and heavily used reference books) that receive extraordinary use over a relatively short period of time. These materials are often side-sewn (a method that sacrifices openability for durability), and fall outside the scope of this standard.

Also outside the scope of this standard are books that may require special bindings due to their unusual format, large size, weight, or thickness. Many art books and reference books fall into this category.

The Committee also recognizes that it may not always be possible for publishers to specify a sewn product. The Committee urges that in these instances publishers consider the point of view of libraries that must rebind adhesive bound books in order to keep them available for use. If an adhesive bound book falls apart, it can be successfully rebound *only if* the grain direction of the text paper runs parallel with the spine of the book and the width of the inner margin is at least 5/8 of an inch wide.

During the course of its work, Standards Committee GG was committed to developing a standard that specified durability while being practical enough to make implementation feasible. In developing specific requirements, the Committee was sensitive to the economic realities faced by publishers. Publishers are urged to comply with this standard when it is appropriate that a particular title be issued in a durable binding. The cost of a durable binding is a legitimate cost of good book making. Likewise, book manufacturers should be capable of producing durable bindings and are encouraged to inform publishers of the existence of the standard for durable hardcover binding, and the benefits of compliance.

The work of Standards Committee GG, funded in part by the Council on Library Resources (CLR), was preceded by an earlier ad hoc group sponsored by CLR, the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity. Established in 1981, its charge was

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to increase knowledge about the permanence and durability of books and to encourage improvements in their physical properties. The Committee's report, Book Longevity, suggested guidelines for permanent paper and durable bindings and urged a continuing dialogue between librarians, publishers, papermakers, and book manufacturers.

Progress toward meeting this goal was made at the 1982 annual meeting of the American Library Association. During that meeting, the Joint Committee of the Resources and Technical Services Division of ALA and the Association of American Publishers sponsored a program, "Physical Quality of the Books Librarians Buy," to discuss the state of book production, examine the impact of inferior binding products on libraries, and consider solutions to problems. Later in 1982, NISO established Standards Committee S to develop a standard for permanent paper. This work was approved and published in 1984 as American National Standard for Information Sciences--Permanent Paper for Printed Library Materials, Z39.48-1984. In developing a standard for durable hardcover bindings, Standards Committee GG affirmed the importance of the longevity of the paper on which books are printed and specified compliance with ANSI/NISO Z39.48 (latest edition) in conjunction with the binding standard.

This standard has been developed based on current knowledge concerning the longevity of bindings. The Committee strongly recommends, however, that research be conducted by appropriate organizations to support the development of improved binding methods. In particular, additional research is needed to examine the durability of adhesive binding, new binding methods, and the materials used in high-production book making.

Suggestions for improvement of this standard are welcome and should be sent to the National Information Standards Organization, P. O. Box 1056, Bethesda, MD 20827, (301) 975-2814.

NISO Standards Committee GG had the following members:

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William Flavell (R.R. Donnelley and Sons Co.)  
Jerome Frank (Publisher's Weekly)  
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This standard was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the National Information Standards Organization (NISO). Approval of this standard does not necessarily imply that all NISO members voted for its approval. At the time it approved this Standard, NISO had the following members:

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## ANSI/NISO Z39.66-1992

### American National Standard for Durable Hardcover Binding for Books

#### 1. Scope and Purpose

**1.1 Scope.** This standard specifies manufacturing methods and materials that will result in durable hardcover binding for books that are manufactured in commercial quantities. Compliance with this standard is recommended for the following categories of materials:

- Important works of fiction and nonfiction
- Scholarly monographs and reprints
- Collected editions
- Books intended primarily for the library market
- Reference books

The standard describes only those manufacturing methods and materials that relate to the durability of the binding, including endpaper attachment and reinforcement, the method of binding leaves together, rounding and backing, case making, and casing-in. Materials specifications are provided for adhesives, boards, covering materials, endpapers, linings, and thread. This standard is *not* intended to cover textbook binding<sup>1</sup>, nor commercial library binding.<sup>2</sup>

**1.2 Purpose.** The purpose of this standard is to encourage and promote the manufacture of durable books by establishing specific parameters that can be specified by publishers. All end users of books—including libraries, academic communities, and the reading public—will benefit from the promulgation of this standard. A durable book is defined as one that can withstand ordinary use for a satisfactory period of time without significant breakdown of the binding structure. For the purpose of this standard, the properties of a durable book include the secure attachment of the leaves together to form the book block, the secure attachment of the book block to its protective cover, and the resistance of the cover to the effects of abrasion, soiling, and exposure to light. The concept of durability includes the attribute of flexibility, i.e., the ability of a book to open well and stay open for

1. Manufacturing standards for textbooks are maintained by the National Association of State Textbook Administrators. Available from the Advisory Commission on Textbook Specifications, 111 Prospect Street, Stamford, CT 06901.
2. A manufacturing standard for commercial library binding is maintained by the Library Binding Institute: The Library Binding Institute Standard for Library Binding, eighth edition. (Rochester, NY: Library Binding Institute, 1986). Available from LBI, 7401 Metro Boulevard, Edina MN 55439. The development of a joint LBI/ANSI/NISO standard, is underway.