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THREE KEY HIGHLIGHTS - REVISION OF ANSI/ASSE Z359.2 STANDARD FOR MANAGED FALL PROTECTION PROGRAMS

There is a great deal of interest from OSH Professionals about the pending approval of the ANSI/ASSE Z359.2 Standard, which addresses managed fall protection programs. Falls from heights is a critical issue for virtually all safety professionals. We expect the new standard to be approved before the end of Calendar Year 2016 and published in early 2017.

We have been asked by many members for information about the key changes in the standard. The overall revision was significant, but we asked Kevin Denis of Gravitec for his views on the changes. Kevin is a well-respected member of the Z359 Committee and played an important in leading the revision of the standard. We thought his views would be of interest to you.

As the Training Manager for Gravitec Kevin has had the opportunity to work with many safety professionals on managed fall protection programs, and this revised standard is definitely stronger and will do more to protect workers from falls from heights.

The 2017 edition of ANSI Z359.2 includes several changes that will benefit all users of the document. The release of this standard is beneficial because it coincides with OSHA’s release of the Walking Working Surface Rule, which includes several requirements for fall protection. ANSI Z359.2’s main objective is to assist employers with establishing minimum requirements for a comprehensive fall protection program to eliminate or control employee’s risk when working at heights. The standard includes several changes, but here are what I (Kevin Denis) see as three key changes and highlights to the new standard:

#1. Re-Organization / Compliance Statements: the standard has been re-organized and is much easier to understand and read. The latest edition has requirements in an organized, easy to understand format and order. The standard establishes what a fall protection program needs include and what an employer needs to do/provide to be compliant with the standard.

#2. Flexibility for Training: the standard has adopted a different format to address unique training needs of employers. Training requirements in the standard include basic training
requirements that apply to all, then provides a list of topics and skills that the fall protection program administrator can pick from according to their specific site needs. Rather than require employers to train people on non-applicable content just to meet the standard, the standard allows program administrators some flexibility to develop site-specific training.

#3. Anchorage Requirements: the standard has been updated to clarify ANSI Z359 position on anchorage selection. Ideally, all anchorages have been proven through a proper analytical process (engineering practices or proof-loading), but when that isn’t possible, the standard provides direction for program administrators to direct authorized, competent and qualified people to identify non-certified anchorages.

We hope this information is of value and ASSE will have more word out on the revised standard after approval by ANSI and the creation of a publication schedule.

If you should have any questions for Kevin Denis at Gravitec on the ANSI/ASSE Z359.2 Standard and the management of fall protection programs please feel free to contact him at Gravitec via denis@gravitec.com.

For more information about the ANSI/ASSE Standards addressing fall protection and fall arrest please visit our Z359 website.

Or, please feel free to contact Tim Fisher with the ASSE Secretariat via the contact information below:

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