Dave Dodge is a long-time professional member of the American Society of Safety Engineers. Dave is a consultant with a focus on the control of hazards and exposures through the effective and efficient implementation of the hierarchy of controls.

The development of voluntary national consensus standards to safeguard safety and health has long been a passion of Dave’s. He serves on a number of committees and below is an update on two of the committees Dave has continued to serve on for the benefit of ASSE and OSH.

An Update on the NFPA 101 Standard: David Dodge (ASSE Technical Representative)

The National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) publishes a new edition every three years. The objective, in the words of the Code, is to protect occupants of buildings for the time needed to evacuate, relocate or defend in place, to maintain structural integrity for the time needed to evacuate, relocate or defend in place and to provide systems that are effective in mitigating the hazard or condition for which they are being used. The Code contains 25 occupancy chapters, each of which addresses various building occupancies from industrial structures to one- and two-family dwellings and both new and existing structures. Each occupancy chapter addresses such life safety issues as means of egress from buildings, occupant load, sprinkler systems and smoke control.

The committee on which I serve to represent the ASSE addresses both new and existing business and mercantile occupancies and the mercantile chapters each contain a section concerning malls. At the beginning of the review cycle for the 2018 edition of the Code the full committee found that the mall sections had not kept up with changes made by mall designers and builders. As a result a task group of committee members was assembled to research the subject and make recommendations to the full committee. I serve as chairperson of that task group. To date the task group has updated terminology and definitions to coincide with current mall designs. In addition, the task group has initiated discussion and research concerning present-day designs and their impact on allowed travel distance to exits, smoke control, dead end limitations and sprinkler system requirements.

The task group will meet one or two more times before we present our findings and recommendations to the full committee in July, 2016. We do not yet have any estimates on a final/revised standard but will be providing more updates and information to the ASSE membership as the process moves on.

This standard establishes requirements for the control of hazardous energy associated with machines, equipment or processes that could cause injury to personnel.

Of additional importance is the purpose, which notes:

The purpose of this standard is to establish requirements and performance objectives for procedures, techniques, designs and methods that protect personnel where injury can occur as a result of the unexpected release of hazardous energy. Unexpected release of hazardous energy can include any unintended motion, energization, start up or release of stored energy, deliberate or otherwise, from the perspective of the person(s) at risk.

The standard was first published in 1982, and in 2003 underwent a substantial revision with, among other things, the addition of a section which assigns a responsibility to the designer and manufacturer to make machines, equipment or processes so that they are equipped with the means and instructions to effectively control hazardous energy. In addition, the 2003 edition expanded the methods of hazardous energy control to include alternative methods of control with the understanding that not all tasks can be safeguarded by “traditional” lockout or tagout programs. While recognizing that lockout must be the primary method of control for hazardous energy, the standard allows the use of alternative methods of hazardous energy control only when a risk assessment is performed and the hierarchy of controls is considered.

The standards committee, made up of dedicated representatives from all aspects of industry, is now in the process of reviewing suggested changes submitted by committee members and members of the public to the 2003 edition of the standard. To date, even though hundreds of suggestions have been considered, the integrity of the 2003 edition has been maintained and the concept and viability of alternative methods of hazardous energy control has been preserved and improved.

The Z244 Committee is meeting during the first week of May in order to review and resolve the technical comments resulting from a recent ballot. Following the meeting the intent is to recirculate an updated standard. The committee will continue to meet through 2016 with the goal of finishing the process of updating the standard this year. Following approval the standard would then be published by ASSE and would also be presented to different regulatory agencies and bodies at both the state and national level.

Below is the current methodology from the ANSI/ASSE Z244.1 Standard. This graph could change in the final standard, but it still gives a good feel for how the committee would like to address the issue of lockout/tagout.
Interested in Participating on a Standards Committee – Representing ASSE?

ASSE is represented on committees that develop and maintain safety standards. Each representative is selected from interested applicants based on their technical expertise in the subject area of the committee, their ability to represent the broad range of ASSE’s membership and their overall knowledge of the SH&E profession. Representatives are approved by the ASSE Standards Development Committee, (SDC).

In their respective positions, ASSE representatives attend meetings of their assigned committee, review written proposals to add to, delete or change a safety standard and vote on the final approval of a standard. They also report back to SDC and keep them apprised of significant standards developments. Many ASSE representatives share their standards knowledge with other ASSE members by writing about the standards in ASSE publications, giving presentations on the standards at the annual professional development conference and consulting with other members who have questions about the standards. All such representatives are volunteers.
If you are interested in representing ASSE on a committee please contact the Society staff to see if/where there are openings. To serve as an ASSE representative on a standards committee, complete and return the application form.

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