

# COUNCIL ON PRACTICES AND STANDARDS

## Serving the Specialist of the Safety, Health and Environmental (SH&E) Profession

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ASSE's Council on Practices and Standards provides you with the following article.

If you would like to reprint this article in your Chapter Newsletter, please notify Rennie Heath at [rheath@asse.org](mailto:rheath@asse.org) and credit the Council on Practices and Standards.

In addition, please refer readers to the Council's website at <http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties>.

### **ANSI/ASSE Z359 Fall Protection Code Receives Final Approval**

Many ASSE members have inquired about the status of the ANSI/ASSE Z359 Fall Arrest/Protection standards.

The United States has not seen a revised or new general industry national consensus standard on fall arrest/protection since the publication of ANSI/ASSE Z359.1-1992 (R1999), but on April 23, 2007, the Z359.2 standard for managed fall protection received final ANSI approval.

ASSE is also pleased to announce that the Z359.0, Z359.1, Z359.3 and Z359.4 standards received final ANSI approval on May 31, 2007. These standards are available for purchase and have an effective date of November 24, 2007.

### **Impact on Public & Private Sectors**

Many members have asked how the standards will impact the public and private sectors. Use of national consensus standards in the United States will be of increased importance as the nation's economy becomes more global. National consensus standards reflect the insights of final end users and the opinions of professionals who work at all levels of public and private sectors in technology development, safety and health, manufacturing, training, financial analysis, personnel and academia. This balanced perspective enables standards to be crafted in a manner that benefits and protects standard users.

ASSE historically supports the increased use of national consensus standards in the formulation of occupational safety and health legislation. Government agencies such as OSHA, MSHA, CPSC and NHTSA should be encouraged to use these standards in accordance with Public Law 104-113, "The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995," and the Office of Management and Budget in its Circular A-119, "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities," as they provide an efficient and effective alternative to traditional public sector rulemaking.

### **Background**

Before ANSI approves an American National Standard, it must verify that the standards developer has met the requirements for due process and consensus. In the judgment of the ANSI Board of Standards Review, consensus is established when directly and materially affected interests reach substantial agreement, which means more than a simple majority but not necessarily unanimity. Consensus also requires that all views and objections be considered and that a concerted effort be made toward their resolution.

Use of American National Standards is completely voluntary. Their existence does not in any respect preclude anyone, whether s/he has approved the standards or not, from manufacturing, marketing, purchasing or using products, processes or procedures not in conformance to the standards.

It should also be noted that ANSI does not develop standards and will under no circumstances give an interpretation of any American National Standard.

The ANSI/ASSE Z359 Fall Arrest/Protection standards evolved from the continuing development of a fall protection standard series. These standards tie the elements of the series together and provide tools that employers may use to develop programs that incorporate such elements. They also address administrative requirements and apply to all occupational and non-occupational activities except those in SIC Division C (construction). They do not apply to sports activities.

Neither the Z359 Committee nor the Secretariat states that these standards are perfect or in their ultimate form. New developments are to be expected, and revision of the standards will be necessary as state-of-the-art technology progresses and further experience is gained. However, it is felt that uniform guidelines for fall protection programs are needed and that the standards in their present form provide the minimum criteria necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive managed fall protection program.

The Z359 Committee acknowledges the critical role of design in influencing the use of proper fall protection equipment. Design deficiencies often increase the risk for employees who may be exposed to fall hazards. Examples include:

1. Lack of rail systems to prevent falls from machines, equipment and structures.
2. Failure to provide engineered anchorages where use of personal fall arrest systems is anticipated.
3. No provision for safe access to elevated work areas.
4. Installation of machines or equipment at heights rather than at floor/ground level to preclude access to elevated areas.
5. Failure to plan for the use of travel restriction or work positioning devices.

The standards also offer guidance on design considerations for new buildings and facilities.

The standards incorporate basic fall safety principles, including hazard survey, hazard elimination and control and education and training. They primarily intend to ensure a proactive approach to fall protection. However, they also address the reactive process of accident investigation to ensure that fall causation receives adequate attention.

### **Descriptions of Newly Approved Standards**

**Standards approved as of May 31, 2007 are as follows:**

ANSI/ASSE Z359.0-2007: Definitions and Nomenclature Used for Fall Protection and Fall Arrest: Establishes the definitions and nomenclature used for the Z359 Fall Protection Code.

ANSI/ASSE Z359.1-2007: Safety Requirements for Personal Fall Arrest Systems, Subsystems and Components: Establishes requirements for the performance, design, marking, qualification, instruction, training, inspection, use, maintenance and removal from service of connectors, full-body harnesses, lanyards, energy absorbers, anchorage connectors, fall arresters, vertical lifelines and self-retracting lanyards comprising personal fall arrest systems for users within the capacity range of 130 to 310 pounds (59 to 140 kg).

ANSI/ASSE Z359.2-2007: Minimum Requirements for a Comprehensive Managed Fall Protection Program: Establishes guidelines and requirements for an employer's managed fall protection program, including policies, duties and training, fall protection procedures, eliminating and controlling fall hazards, rescue procedures, incident investigations and evaluating program effectiveness.

ANSI/ASSE Z359.3-2007: Safety Requirements for Positioning and Travel Restraint Systems Establishes requirements for the performance, design, marking, qualification, test methods and instructions of lanyards and harnesses comprising personal positioning and travel restraint systems for authorized persons within the capacity range of 130 pounds to 310 pounds (59kg to 140kg).

ANSI/ASSE Z359.4-2007: Safety Requirements for Assisted-Rescue and Self-Rescue Systems, Subsystems and Components: Establishes requirements for the performance, design, marking, qualification, instruction, training, use, maintenance and removal from service of connectors, harnesses, lanyards, anchorage connectors, winches/hoists, descent control devices, rope tackle blocks and self-retracting lanyards with integral rescue capability comprising rescue systems used in preplanned self-rescue and assisted-rescue applications for 1-2 persons.

To purchase the Z359 Fall Protection Code, visit <https://www.asse.org/shoponline/products/Z359-PKG.php>.