

Motor Vehicle Safety & the Z15 Standard

PS: Please provide a brief description of your professional background and of your position on the ANSI/ASSE Z15 ASC.



Tim Healey

Tim: I am a member of the ANSI Z15 main committee, with a particular interest in driver education and training. As the director of safety at Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Co. (HSB) for the past 17 years, I manage the occupational safety program for nearly 300 engineering inspectors across the country and around the world. These engineers comprise the majority of our 400-vehicle fleet of midsize sedans and one SUV that covers nearly 15 million miles annually. Before this, I worked in international marine transportation safety. That followed my retirement from the U.S. Coast Guard where I served as a marine safety officer.

PS: The Z15.1 standard addresses both commercial and noncommercial vehicles. With respect to noncommercial fleet vehicles, how does the Z15.1 standard align with OSHA's renewed focus on the safety of employees whose duties require driving but do not hold commercial driver's licenses (CDL)?

Tim: I see Z15 as a model that OSHA may very well have reviewed as it considered how to address driver/employee safety when it recently reentered this arena. OSHA's presence at the two recent national conferences on distracted driving in the Washington, DC, area reinforced its recognition of the hazards of driving to employees and employers in non-CDL operations. I also see Z15 as a credible benchmark available to OSHA for its possible use in the future.

PS: How can employers use Z15.1 to address hours of service, fatigue and vehicle inspections among employees who drive noncommercial fleet vehicles?

Tim Healey is the director of safety at Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Co. (HSB) where he oversees the occupational safety support of the field-based engineers. He is a retired U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Officer, where he conducted commercial ship and port facility inspections as well as transportation mishap investigations. Healey is a professional member of ASSE, a member of AIHA and the Connecticut Safety Society, and he serves on the Board of Directors of the Safety Council of Western New England as well as Survive the Drive. He is also an active member of the ANSI Z359 (Fall Protection/Arrest) and Z117 (Confined Spaces) committees. Healey is a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and he holds an M.B.A. (Transportation) from Golden Gate University.

Tim: ANSI Z15 gives employers a credible tool that is reflective of best practices. Employers who operate noncommercial fleets can learn from commercial fleet operators on matters of common interest. After all, common management goals, regardless of who the fleet operator is, should include crash avoidance (and all of the fatalities, injuries, property damage and expenses that result) as well as economical/efficient operation.

Employee/driver behavior behind the wheel is the key. No employer can afford to have an employee operate under the influence, text or fall asleep while driving on company business, whether it is in an 80,000-lb tractor trailer or a 3,600-lb sedan.

Perhaps the improved national recognition of and the continuing conversations on distracted driving and teenaged/inexperienced drivers will enlighten employers to these hazards and the need to have their drivers recognize and address them. After all, we do share the same roads.

PS: How do you believe the Z15.1 standard has impacted injury and accident rates among commercial and noncommercial vehicle fleets since its release in 2006? Has Z15 ASC received any feedback from employers on how the standard has streamlined operations?

Tim: Some anecdotal conversations have been heard, but I have not read any comprehensive reports. I can report, however, that in following the Z15 guidance on initial and refresher driver education/training and periodic driver record checks plus periodic reporting mandates among other practices found in the standard, my employer's fleet has seen a noteworthy decline in the severity of its fleet vehicle crashes, along with a reduction in the number of crash events.

PS: What revisions are planned for the next version of the Z15.1 standard? Will it further emphasize the prevention of distracted driving?

Tim: You hit the nail on the head—distracted driving is the current big effort. The growing need to understand what distracted driving might entail will, in my opinion, lead to further and significant discussion. It is much more than handheld cell phones or even texting, although these are the

Hotlinks

ANSI American National Standards Institute www.ansi.org

ASSE American Society of Safety Engineers www.asse.org

ASTM ASTM International www.astm.org

Connecticut Safety Society www.ctsafety.org

DOT U.S. Department of Transportation www.dot.gov

DISTRACTION.GOV

HSB Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Co. www.hsb.com

OSHA Occupational Safety & Health Administration www.osha.gov

SurvivetheDrive.org

USCG U.S. Coast Guard www.uscg.mil

WHO World Health Organization www.who.int

most widely identified sources of driving while distracted. National statistics support the need to address distracted driving in our driver education and training efforts. Studies from around the world tell us the same thing: a driver not focused on the activity of driving is a hazard. This is what Bob Green of **SurvivetheDrive.org** calls DWO—driving while oblivious.

PS: You are a defensive driving instructor, and high-performance driving is one of your hobbies. What kind of insight does this experience bring to your activities on Z15 ASC?

Tim: Participating in autocross and track events throughout the years has taught me much about precision driving, car control and active risk management. As a student at an on-track school, I found that having someone with significantly more experience than me sitting in the passenger seat coaching me is infinitely more effective than watching a video, listening to a lecture or taking an online class.

As a result, my understanding of the physics underlying every move I make when I manipulate the steering wheel, throttle or brake has grown immensely. I now have more and better tools to both make me a better driver as well as a more informed trainer, both in the classroom and when I am the one in the passenger seat. For example, how drivers choose to actively and purposefully use their eyes is a cornerstone to safe, effective driving, whether on the track or on the street.

A key aspect to this experience is the more controlled environment of a racetrack. Specifically, the vehicle operators at these events are focused on what we are doing. We have enhanced warning systems (flaggers, caution lights) to advise us of possible trouble ahead. Plus vehicle movement is one way and there is no cross traffic. And so on.

However, most of the drivers with whom we all share public roads have not had any driver training since they received their first full license at age 18 or so. And without meaningful refresher training, adults will fall into habits that are better described as complacency than purposeful behavior.

PS: How can employers best incorporate the Z15.1 standard into their overall risk management and risk assessment programs?

Tim: I think that if an employer examines how many work hours his/her employees spend behind the wheel, the potential consequences of a bad event, as well as all of the time and expenses involved, sound business practices will dictate the need for that employer to bring a higher level of energy and emphasis to their employees' safe driving.

Indeed, Z15.1 has been crafted to easily meld into a management framework that includes

hazard recognition, risk assessment and overall risk management. Significant elements of Z15.1 may already be in place. For example, if a driving record check is already something sought through existing hiring practices, that is an active step in the right direction.

PS: How do you believe the next version of the Z15.1 standard will influence driver hiring and training procedures?

Tim: With a continued national dialogue on distracted driving and highway safety, employers cannot ignore the need to reduce the risks to their employees/drivers. Economic and comprehensive cost estimates for an employer published by credible national organizations peg the cost for a fatal vehicle crash in excess of \$4 million. And the human toll is even greater. Again, the ANSI Z15.1 standard can provide employers with a credible, workable management framework to help them address their level of risk. And with continuing review and evolution following ANSI procedures, the value of the Z15 standard will only grow.

PS: The Z15.1 standard is the first in a series of planned safety standards for motor vehicle operations. What topics will future standards address?

Tim: Other topics identified by the broad-ranging expertise of the committee members include identifying mishaps/injuries occurring during the loading or discharge of commercial vehicles, improving driver training with an emphasis on actual skills and possibly expanding the standard to address off-road vehicles.

PS: What are your long-term expectations for the Z15.1 standard?

Tim: The World Health Organization predicts that by 2025 there will be 1 billion motor vehicles in the world, and motor-vehicle-related fatalities will be the third largest cause of unintentional deaths. The roads are getting more crowded, yet our demand for motor vehicles is not diminishing. If we do not operate these devices in a safe manner, they will extract an increasingly heavy toll on all of us. If we do not take stock of the risks endemic to motor vehicle fleet operations and act responsibly on that knowledge, we can only aggravate this downward trend.

The Z15.1 standard can help apply the brakes to such a slide, but only when responsible organizations choose to employ it. With increased visibility and broader application, my expectation is that Z15.1 will prove to be a catalyst for positive change.

With a continued national dialogue on distracted driving and highway safety, employers cannot ignore the need to reduce the risks to their employees and/or drivers.