

Hotlinks

ANSI

American National Standards Institute
www.ansi.org

ASSE

American Society of Safety Engineers
www.asse.org

ASTM

ASTM International
www.astm.org

CEN

European Committee for Standardization
www.cenorm.be

ISO

International Organization for Standardization
www.iso.ch

JCAHO

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations
www.jcaho.org

NFPA

National Fire Protection Assn.
www.nfpa.org

NIST

National Institute of Standards and Technology
www.nist.gov

SCC

Standards Council of Canada
www.scc.ca

UL

Underwriters Laboratories Inc.
www.ul.com

ANSI/AIHA Z10, OHS Management Systems

To learn more about how the ANSI/American Industrial Hygiene Assn. (AIHA) Z10 standard, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Management Systems, will affect the future of workplace safety and health, ASSE recently spoke to three representatives of the Z10 Committee—Don Jones, Kathy Seabrook and Jim Smith.

ANSI Z10 covers management leadership and employee participation; planning; implementation and operation; evaluation and corrective action; and management review.

Z10's Impact on Workplace SH&E

Now that Z10 has received final approval, many have begun to predict how this performance-related standard, which helps companies to integrate OHS management into their overall business management systems, will impact safety and health in the workplace.

It may be too soon to determine exactly how Z10 will affect companies of all sizes, but some believe that medium-size companies will see the most change. Smith, one of two ASSE delegates on the Z10 Committee, asserts that the standard will most influence those medium-size companies "that use traditional safety programs and delivery processes." He adds, "It will be difficult for small-size companies to comply with some of the components in the Z10 standard because they generally do not have the safety resources to implement those components."

Jones, representative for Dow Chemical Co. on the Z10 Committee, believes large-size companies will also benefit from the standard. "Since small-size companies have fewer SH&E resources, I do not think the standard will be as applicable to them," says Jones.

How well Z10 will be received depends largely on marketing and regulatory efforts, but the standard's user-friendly design will be a major selling point. According to Seabrook, the second ASSE delegate on the Z10 Committee, "The Z10 standard is well-organized and balances what is required and what is suggested. It also contains concise definitions, clear visuals, left-side/right-side readability and an annex of resources, all of which make it a good process document for an OHS management system." In addition, Seabrook predicts that if the market drives the need for third-party verification, RABQSA International will eventually provide an accreditation program for auditor certification as it has done for ISO 9001 quality and ISO 14001 environmental standards.

Another advantage of Z10 is that it is a voluntary consensus standard. OSHA regulatory standards can take a minimum of 12 to 15 years to pass. According to Smith, during the development of a voluntary consensus standard, different groups of experts and stakeholders from various industries meet "to create the best possible product in a short period of time." Smith also believes that a voluntary consensus standard allows for more open discussion among representatives during the standard development process, and it curbs interference from lawyers and special interest groups. By definition, voluntary consensus standards are optional—companies can choose to use them. Jones believes that this feature alone increases the possibility that Z10 will be implemented.

However, Jones, Seabrook and Smith agree that the standard cannot be implemented without strong senior management leadership and commitment. Seabrook stresses that without appropriate "resources, focus, incentive and direction" from senior management, Z10 will be impossible to implement. But, as Smith emphasizes, employee participation is also important in the effective implementation of the standard.

International Impact on Z10

Meanwhile, many have questioned how the Z10 standard would be affected should a similar international standard be introduced. It may be difficult to create an international standard since several different countries already have their own standards in place or in development, but Smith indicates that although the Z10 standard is not intended to become an international standard, an opportunity exists to produce an implementation guideline for the different standards worldwide. "If you are working in the U.K., you could use the implementation guideline to follow that nation's international standard. Conversely, if you are working in a country that does not have an OHS management systems standard, you could use the Z10 standard as a guideline. If you look at how the standard is written, you will see that it really is designed to move in the direction of an implementation guide," says Smith.

Seabrook predicts that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) will initiate an OHS management system standard, while Z10 will be used as a reference document. She also points out that "OHSAS 18001 continues to be recognized outside the U.S., even for U.S. multinational companies' operations outside the U.S."

Jones, however, believes that an international OHS management standard will have little effect on the use of the Z10 standard at U.S. jobsites unless international companies require otherwise.

Government Adoption

Many have also debated whether government agencies will adopt the Z10 standard now that it is approved, especially since the Z10 Committee did not write the standard to accommodate government

Z10 Available from ASSE

ANSI/AIHA Z10, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, is now available from ASSE. To order, contact ASSE's Customer Service Dept. at (847) 699-2929, or visit www.asse.org/fr3388.htm.

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Standards Developments

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agency regulations. Jones points out that the U.S. Congress and OSHA have wanted to pass SH&E legislation for some time, but it is uncertain whether ANSI standards such as Z10 can be adopted by reference. Smith anticipates that given the current political climate, government agencies will not reference the Z10 standard into a regulation, but he does believe that OSHA could consider using the standard for enforcement action.

OSHA appears to be one government agency that would benefit greatly from the Z10 standard since it was represented on the Z10 Committee. Smith suggests that OSHA may use the Z10 standard in place of its current proposed safety management standard, and that it could apply components of the standard to its Voluntary Protection Programs.

Companies of All Sizes Encouraged to Use Z10

While advocating Z10 to government agencies is of high priority, companies of

all sizes should be encouraged to use the standard. "Even those companies that have their own OHS management system standards in place can use the Z10 standard as a tool to improve them," Jones suggests. "If companies compare their own standards to Z10 on an annual basis, they can identify any gaps and close them, which will ultimately improve performance and reduce incident rates." Smith advises that companies should have "leadership commitment and employee participation in place before the Z10 standard is made functional in their management process."

The Z10 standard's potential to protect and improve worker safety and health is unlimited, but it will take a concerted effort among senior management and employees to ensure that the standard is successfully integrated into business management systems. With the support of government agencies such as OSHA, the impact of this standard on occupational safety and health will be nothing less than positive.

New Standards Proposed BSR/ASHRAE 170P-200x, Ventilation of Healthcare Facilities


American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

Inc. (ASHRAE) has proposed a new standard, Ventilation of Health Care Facilities (BSR/ASHRAE 170P-200x). This standard, which intends to ensure high-quality ventilation in healthcare facilities, is cosponsored by American Society for Healthcare Engineering. Most patients, workers and visitors are healthy enough to endure the pathogenic particles found in the air in healthcare facilities, but poor ventilation in facilities can increase the presence of these particles in the air—a danger for individuals who are most susceptible. Therefore, the standard asserts that further attention must be given to the design of ventilation systems in healthcare facilities. (*Adapted from ANSI Standards Action, Vol. 36, No. 38.*)

UL Standards BSR/UL 60745-2-13-200x & BSR/UL 1436-200x

UL has proposed two new standards, Safety for Handheld, Motor-Operated Electric Tools, Part 2: Particular Requirements for Chain Saws (BSR/UL 60745-2-13-200x) and Safety for Outlet Circuit Testers and Similar Indicating Devices (BSR/UL 1436-200x).

BSR/UL 60745-2-13-200x is an international standard that addresses the safety of handheld, motor-operated or magnetically driven electric tools, the rated voltage of which is not more than

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