

Press Release - Z359 Effective Date - Significant Information

New Effective Date Announced For ANSI/ASSE Fall Protection Code Providing Tools And Resources To Keep Workers Safe

Des Plaines, IL (October 9, 2007) - Recognizing the need to allow safety, health and environmental professionals (SH&E) more time to adjust to safety practices recommended in the Z359 Fall Protection Code, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Z359 Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) recently announced an extension of the code's effective date from October 15 to a new effective date of November 24, 2007.

The ANSI/ASSE Z359 Fall Protection Code is a series of newly approved voluntary national consensus standards written to offer more resources for employers to protect workers from fall hazards, which are one of the top four causes of on-the-job fatalities in the United States. By offering employers these new standards, the code intends to prevent fall related injuries and deaths especially when, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2006, fatal work-related injuries due to falls in the private industry amounted to 809 deaths, a 5 percent increase since 2005. Since the fatality census began, the 809 fatal falls in 2006 was the third highest total since 1992. BLS also noted that in 2005 non-fatal injuries and illnesses involving falls in the private industry totaled 255,750.

"The Z359 Fall Protection Code is one of the most important safety-related voluntary national consensus standards in the last 20 years," said Randall Wingfield, Z359 ASC chair and president of Gravitec Systems, Inc. "In particular, the Z359.2 managed approach to fall protection standard will have significant impact on SH&E professionals. The Z359 ASC is eager to work with the safety profession to implement the new standards to better protect and train the worker at height."

"I support the revised effective date because I believe it will aid in an orderly transition to compliance. Since this is a voluntary standard, there is not provision for 'grandfathering' as in some regulatory programs," added Joseph Feldstein of Mine Safety Appliances and Z359 ASC member. "The 60-day extension of the effective date provides time for employers, safety professionals and suppliers who have not yet seen the document to review and understand its impact."

ASSE serves as the secretariat for the Z359 Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) on fall protection and related systems. The Z359 Fall Protection Code is available in both print and electronic format. Wingfield and Feldstein will address the Code via webinar on October 10, 2007. For more information on the code or webinar, contact ASSE Customer Service at 847-699-2929 or visit ASSE's website.

Founded in 1911, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the largest and oldest professional safety organization and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. Its more than 31,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor and education. For more information please go to www.asse.org.