

ASSE Announces Approval of Ground-Breaking Z590.3 Standard for Prevention Through Design

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) recently announced the approval of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/ASSE Z590.3 standard, 'Prevention through Design: Guidelines for Addressing Occupational Risks in Design and Redesign Processes.' This new standard provides guidance on including prevention through design concepts within an occupational safety and health management system, and can be applied in any occupational setting.

The Z590.3 standard focuses specifically on the avoidance, elimination, reduction and control of occupational safety and health hazards and risks in the design and redesign process. Through the application of the concepts presented in the standard, decisions about occupational hazards and risks can be incorporated into the process of design and redesign of work areas, tools, equipment, machinery, substances and work processes. Design and redesign also includes construction, manufacture, use, maintenance and disposal of reuse of equipment used on-the-job. One of the key elements of this standard is that it provides guidance for "life-cycle" assessments and a design model that balances environmental and occupational safety and health goals over the life span of a facility, process or product. The Z590.3 focuses on the four key stages of occupational risk management. The pre-operational, operational, post incident and post operational stages are all addressed within.

Fred Manuele, CSP, P.E., Chair of the Z590.3 committee that developed the standard stated, "This standard supports and gives guidance for the well-established premise that occupational hazards and risks are most effectively and economically avoided, eliminated or controlled in the design and redesign process."

Development and publication of this standard was a major goal for the NIOSH Prevention through Design Plan for the National Initiative. ASSE's leadership in developing this standard and gaining ANSI approval lays the foundation for organizations to include prevention through design principles in their occupational safety and health management systems. The standard also provides tools for determining and achieving acceptable levels of risk to hazards that cannot be eliminated during design.

Z590.3 complements, but does not replace, performance objectives existing in other specific standards and procedures. The goals of applying prevention through design concepts in an occupational setting are to: achieve acceptable risk level; prevent or reduce occupationally related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities; and reduce the cost of retrofitting necessary to mitigate hazards and risks that were not sufficiently addressed in the design or redesign processes.

Standards play a critical role in the field of occupational safety and health, providing a set of regulations and level of excellence. Standards help businesses improve safety and quality of life for employees, while enhancing competitive advantage for global businesses. The ASSE Standards Development Committee representing all industries works diligently to provide the most up-to-date standards to aid in regulating dangerous work activities and preventing injuries and illnesses.

ASSE currently serves as the ANSI secretariat for 10 additional standards' committees, working with professionals worldwide to establish best practices for protecting people, property and the environment. ASSE has published over 60 standards and has several new standards under development. For more information about ASSE' s work with ANSI and current standards projects, please visit www.asse.org/publications/standards. The newly approved Z590.3 standard will be available soon in print and electronically. For more information, please contact ASSE Customer Service at 847-699-2929 or customerservice@asse.org.

Founded in 1911 and celebrating its centennial, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the oldest professional safety society and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. Its more than 34,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members lead, manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor, healthcare and education. For more information, please go to www.asse.org and to view the new ASSE – A Century of Safety film go to www.asse.org/assecenturyofsafety.