

## Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle Operations

### ANSI/ASSE Z15.1-2017

The Z15.1-2017 Committee strives to provide stakeholders with current information and tools to effectively manage fleet risk. The committee recently updated the standard in several key areas:

- Section 4.3, Distracted Driving. This section was revised to address all forms of in-vehicle information systems.
- Section 4.8, Operational Policies. This new section addresses business use requirements; personal use (who else is permitted to use the vehicle and training requirements); driver-owned vehicles (mileage reimbursement and insurance); and rental cars.
- Section 5.1, Driver Qualifications. In revising this section, the committee added requirements that define acceptance criteria for applicants and existing drivers. The standard recommends that organizations consider checking records on other authorized drivers (i.e., family members).

The standard also contains several new resources, including information on a driver training program, a tool for assessing safe driving methods, and a tool for evaluating risk (management, leadership and administration, operational environment, driver, vehicle, and incident reporting and analysis).

"Z15.1-2017 provides a structured approach to proactively identify system gaps and effectively manage fleet risk," says Terry Ketchum, Z15.1-2017 Committee Chair. "Organizations should use the standard to assess their fleet's risk, develop an action plan to close the gaps, implement corrective actions and continuously reevaluate the fleet management system."

Ketchum says the consensus standard aims to provide organizations with a written document to control risks associated with the operation of motor vehicles. "All organizations, including local, state and federal governments, can use this standard to manage their fleets."

"Consensus standards provide guidance, reflect current expertise and establish effective industry practices," says Peggy Ross, Chair of ASSE's Standards Development Committee. "OSH professionals use ANSI/ASSE Z15.1-2017 as a resource to quickly broaden their knowledge and stay up to date on what leading experts are doing to mitigate

risk and prevent motor vehicle incidents. Consensus standards expound upon existing regulatory requirements, such as Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) regulations, and fill the gap where regulations do not exist or apply, such as for a sales fleet."

Bill Hinderks is the former chair of the Z15 committee. He says that the standard's scope provides a template for organizations to address the people side of fleet management. "Historically, fleet management was more oriented toward vehicles, such as purchasing, maintenance, inspection," he explains. "The standard addresses vehicle issues certainly, but shifts the emphasis to managing risk more effectively with its focus on drivers and driving."

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of work-related deaths in the U.S. Because of this, OSH professionals must be familiar with Z15.1-2017. "A driver's workplace is predominantly out on the roads and highways," Ketchum says. "Many organizations overlook fleet operations in their safety programs, and the OSH Act does not formally address this risk. As safety professionals, our role, responsibility and passion are to ensure that our employees are safe in the workplace," he says. "Z15.1-2017 provides the tools to successfully manage fleet risk."

"Driving is the most dangerous activity that the majority of an organization's employees engage in, both at work and in their personal time," Hinderks says. "OSHA does not directly or formally address this workplace safety issue. In the past, OSH professionals did not have a place to find a uniform program standard. We had to find other sources such as insurance carriers or safety program vendors for tools such as program models, forms and checklists. FMCSA regulations address many important issues, but the agency's emphasis is compliance to the content of the regulations. Z15.1-2017 provides a more comprehensive outline for managing risk for regulated vehicles as well as unregulated fleets of all sizes."

The 2017 version of the standard provides additional guidance and greater clarity. In addition, the expanded appendixes, which technically are not part of the standard, provide tools that organiza-



Bill Hinderks



Terry Ketchum



Peggy Ross

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**Terry L. Ketchum** is manager, health, safety and environment, at Covestro LLC. Ketchum has more than 25 years' safety and health experience. He is a professional member of ASSE's Northern Ohio Chapter and Chair of the Z15 ASC. He also serves on various ASSE technical committees, is a member of the Transportation, Industrial Hygiene and Ergonomics practice specialties, and a past member of the Standards Development Committee. Ketchum holds a B.E. in Chemical Engineering from Youngstown State University.

**Peggy Ross, R.N., M.S., COHN-S/CM, FAAOHN, CSP, CPE**, is Chair of ASSE's Standards Development Committee. She is senior corporate manager, environment, health and safety, Baxter International Inc. Ross is a professional member of ASSE's Northeastern Illinois Chapter, a member of the Transportation and Ergonomics practice specialties, and a member of the WISE Common Interest Group.

tions can use when implementing the standard so they do not have to start from scratch.

The standard addresses aggressive driving (e.g., speeding, tailgating, yelling, excessive use of the horn) in Section 4.4, High-Risk Driving Behaviors. Risky driving behaviors and aggression can escalate into road rage. According to the standard, organizations should periodically evaluate drivers' behaviors using tools such as motor vehicle record checks, safety ride-alongs, review of past incidents and crashes). Based on that evaluation, organizations should take positive, proactive steps to raise driver awareness of the risks associated with aggressive driving.

"People have different perceptions of what aggressive driving is, but they sometimes are not certain about the common behaviors associated with it," Hinderks says. "Z15.1-2017 outlines these types of behaviors so that organizations and drivers are able to better identify actions defined as aggressive behavior."

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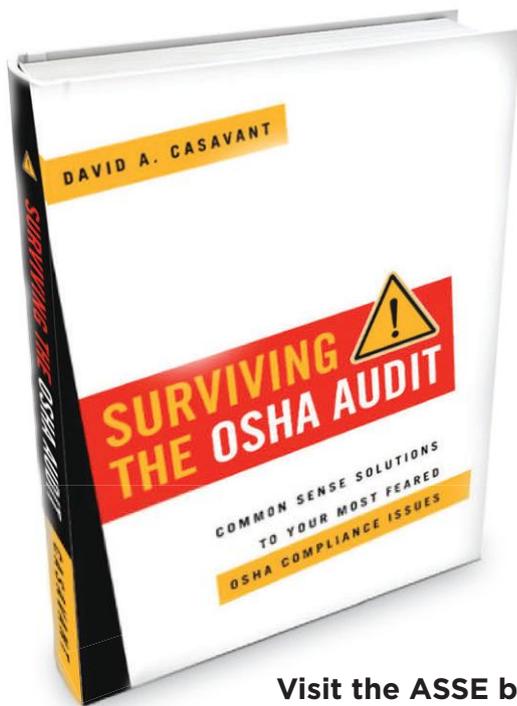
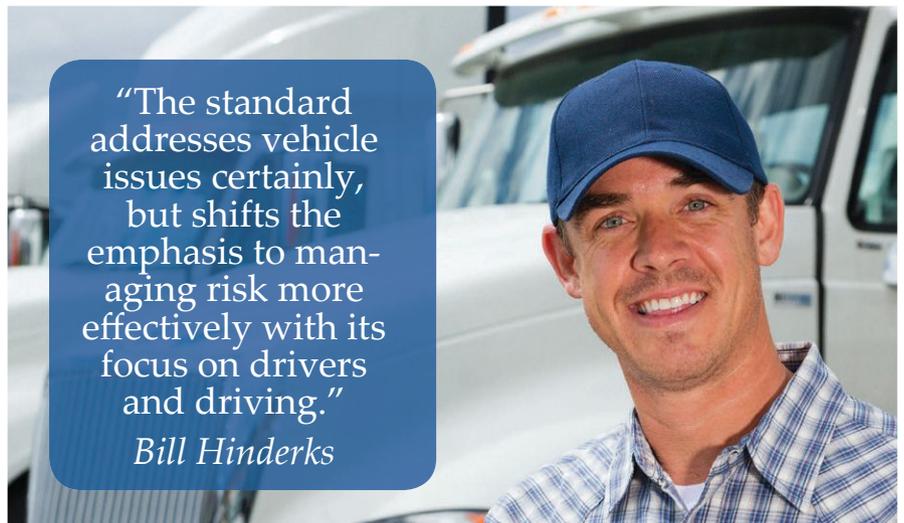
Technology provides drivers with vehicle safety features that prevent or significantly reduce injuries and fatalities. "These features include event data recorders, collision avoidance systems and rear vision/detection systems," Ketchum says. "Z15.1-2017 discusses these safety devices along with vehicle safety informational resources that should be reviewed when purchasing vehicles."

The standard cautions that certain technologies marketed as having safety value may also have undesirable consequences. The best examples, Hinderks says, are hands-free cell phone technol-

ogy and on-board wireless capabilities. "Many states have done a disservice to safety by allowing these to be used as an alternative to handheld devices," he explains. "These states are indirectly endorsing cell phone use while driving, even though studies say hands-free phone use is not safer. The same is true for things like GPS units. GPS has made it easier and faster to find places, but entering information into the system while in motion is a significant distraction."

Learn more about the ANSI/ASSE Z15.1-2017 standard at [www.asse.org/standards](http://www.asse.org/standards).

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