

Scott Fowler

Hello everyone, and welcome to the case for safety podcast. I'm your host, Scott Fowler. I appreciate you being with us today as we enter a new era on the podcast and come to you on video, really excited to continue to bring you, continue to bring you conversations with safety and health experts in this new format. And, for those of you who, longtime listeners of the show, you might remember all the way back in 2018 when we first launched the podcast, our very first episode was a conversation about industry consensus standards.

And so, as we enter this new era, we thought, it would be fitting to have a similar conversation about ANSI/ASSP standards and how they can help you improve safety and health at your workplace. And I'm very happy to welcome, my good friend Lauren Bauer Schmidt, senior manager of standards and technical services at ASSP, to help us get up to speed on all the latest news in ANSI/ASSP standards.

Lauren, welcome. Thank you so much for being here.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Oh, Scott, you flatter me. It is so fun to be back with you again. And it's exciting to be, you know, in video and in 3D. So this is going to be fun. A whole new era for the podcast. Yes. Very exciting. And thank you for your continued support of the podcast, over the years.

Scott Fowler

And, let's dive in. So we're talking about Ansi, SSP standards. And for our listeners and viewers out there who may not be, familiar with these, I thought we could start with just kind of an overview of what ANSI/ASSP standards are and how they come together.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Yes, we should definitely start at the beginning as to what in the world these things are, and kind of a bit of why it matters. And the big takeaway is that these standards are something that multiple groups of people from multiple industries, multiple backgrounds all come together and say, this is what we agree is good. This is what we've all come together to say. This is what we should be doing to provide a high level of safety in, our occupational settings. So we often see white papers.

We often see things that are, put out by sponsors, and that all has a place. And I'm not putting that down. But the strength of our standards is that we have different folks from the industry coming together. And, you know, having lively discussions about, what a, what kind of a safety program should be in place.

So you've got folks who are manufacturers, they have a perspective. You have folks that are from the labor, areas. They have a perspective. Academia, all these groups, they come together. And that's what makes it a consensus standard. You've been to a couple of these meetings, Scott. They are lively. They, have a lot of passion.

And usually it's because people really care, right? And so they are knowledgeable and with their background, they want it to be the best of the best, based, on their background. And that's how they come together, make these standards. So, by no means easy, but pretty powerful when you get the group to come together and say, yeah, this is what we say, good is, go do go implement.

Scott Fowler

You touched on it a little bit there, but this these committees really are made up of, you know, a wide, you know, cross-section of people, you know, from different industries with, you know, different interests, different things. They're looking for, to come out of the standards, but, you know, all working towards the same goal.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Yeah. They're from all over the place. Yeah. And, you know, some of our standards are pretty niche specific. So you kind of need folks that have that real specific knowledge. One of our more specific standards is, hydrogen sulfide training. You know, that stuff that stinks and nobody wants to be around. It's pretty toxic stuff. So we have to have, you know, people who are really knowledgeable in that area to help put that together.

Then you've got other things like fall protection or training, metrics risk, all these different topics. Yeah. You've got a wide range of folks who are out there. Maybe it's their industry, maybe it's oil and gas, maybe it's construction manufacturing. They've got a particular perspective compared to some of our labor unions and what they experience and what they, would want to see in a standard.

So, yeah, that's the power of it. Like I said, is really all those groups coming together and, yeah, hashing it out. What what's going to actually be on the page, that people have to follow.

Scott Fowler

Sure. You mentioned a few of them there, but yeah, these cover so many different topics. You know, you mentioned fall protection. There's construction and demolition, hydrogen sulfide, confined spaces, lockout tag out.

It does really, you know, run the gamut of just about anything and everything you might, you know, come across it in your workplace. So they're a really valuable resource in that way.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's something for people to understand is that ASSP, we write a subset of the occupational safety standards. We don't write all of them.

So if you're out there wearing eye protection, foot protection, that is a different organization than us. If you are looking specifically at machine guarding, that is a different group than us. So a lot of times there's there's different organizations that need that whole suite of standards. To be honest, they probably don't really care who writes them.

They just need the information so that they can go and implement that in their area. So, it's getting all those safety standards together. So we're not the biggest, safety secretariat, standards Secretariat out there. You know, you got your, your, your big focus of NFPA, you all and some of those other folks. But for occupational safety, we're pretty big.

A lot of those that you mentioned, Scott, are ones that people are using every day.

Scott Fowler

Before we move on from that, when you say, Secretary, we're not talking about the horse. So when you say this, this is the the secretariat of these standards, what does that mean?

Lauren Bauerschmidt

I'm also not just going to go fill up your coffee mug, Scott.

No, that is also not my job as a secretariat. Yeah, it's a funky, outdated term. Probably. Really? We're a product manager. Sometimes we say we're herding cats. You know, it's a lot of organization. So at ASSP, we do not actually write any of the standards. I never write any part of the standard. I never determine who's going to be on the roster and be a voting member.

My role is to make sure that the standards committees are following the rules. So is it open? Is it transparent? Do we have all those different, diverse groups of categories, categories of folks who are participating when people comment, other comments being hurt, all of those rules. That's what we do as the secretariat, as the project manager, as the cat herder.

So you're right, is not a horse or the coffee maker. But it's a very important job. But we all have a kind of a, a delineation. I think actually some of the folks on our committees are happy to not have to think about those rules and not have to think about those things. They

can focus on the technical content, and I help them like, okay, these are the next steps to get the standard, approved by ANSI.

So that's really my role. Thank you for clarifying. You know, we all use words in our industry, right? That we all think we know. Everybody understands. But, yeah, keep me honest when I start using these acronyms and silly words. Scott.

Scott Fowler

No worries. There are a lot of acronyms to sift through in this industry as, as we know, so, you know, with that, with that groundwork, it let's kind of get into, you know, the latest news and updates, with, ANSI/ASSP standards.

I know there's been a lot of developments in recent months. So what are what are some things that, folks should know about about, these, recent updates to ANSI/ASSP standards.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Well, my favorite new standard is the Z310.1. Completely new, and it is for risk management guidelines for assessing and managing risks. Why is that important?

Because every safety professional, every single one of us is managing and assessing risk. That's what we do. That's why we're hired. That's why you have brought, you know, a safety professional on to your staff in the first place. There's risk. What are we going to do about it? Right. So there's a risk that someone's going to get hurt.

What are we going to do about it to make sure that that doesn't happen? So this new standard is a US based risk standard. We've got a lot of our folks who are involved, with the international group who have come over to help us with this. It's really the whole lifecycle of risk management. So maybe you're at the beginning stages. You're the at the end stages, maybe you're upper level management, maybe you're, a shift supervisor. You can really use the standard at all levels. And it really ties in with some of our other standards. It really ties in with Z10 safety management systems. Excuse me. It really helps frame that. Again, it's not just the safety person saying, hey, we're doing this.

It's the whole system. It's management. Leadership's involved. All the resources are allocated, some more than just, a higher level person saying, yep, go do it. Well that's great, but now I need the resources to go do it. So it's the whole system coming together. And sometimes doing something is a risk, sometimes not doing something is a risk.

And you can use the standard and all of those areas. So that one is our new shiny standard that's out there. Makes me very happy to have that out. And again, all safety professionals

can use that because you're looking at risk all the time. So some of our SSP standards are very broad like that. Risk standard like Z 10.0 for safety management systems like Z16 for metrics.

Those are standards that in my opinion, every safety professional could use. Because those are things, no matter what industry and no matter what problem you're trying to solve, you can use those standards. Then we have the really niche specific standards, right. So we just had, whole slew. That's a technical term of a ten standards that were just published.

These are not new standards, but they're revisions. So that means that the committee is looked at and thought, okay, there's some things that have changed since the last time the standard was revised. Let's update it. Let's add to it. So we've got, two standards that relate to nets. Okay. So I would like to not fall off the side of a building.

But if I did and I'm caught by a net, there's one standard. I also don't want stuff to fall off my building during construction. And there's a debris net. And also that of course, of course aligns with protecting the public. We don't want to make we wanna make sure that, you know, the workers or the public get hurt.

So those are the two net standards that just came out. We have one on, elevators and hoists. Think about all the times you drive by or you actually are working or managing on a construction site. You got to get stuff up and down, people up and down. How do you do that? How you do that safely?

How do you manage that? And actually that standard is, used in a lot of state plans. That's probably one of our most well used, well known standard, the eight, ten, four and then one that just today who got published is the eight, ten, 26. And that's emergency preparedness. Again, think about, the difference of being an, a manufacturer site where everything is, static and that I know where the I know where the phone is to call for help.

I know that the fire department is down the street. I know all these things versus some construction sites. Maybe that emergency, professional is not nearby. What is your plan? What are you going to put in place in the event of. And that's really what that standard, focuses on. So yeah, we've got a wide range of standards that have just come out more to come.

We've got a couple 359 fall protection standards coming out. I would say probably later this year. So lots going on, Scott.

Scott Fowler

And just to clarify, you mentioned, a10 that is the family of, construction and demolition. NCA is this B standard. So if we if we want to kind of thank you talk a little bit about the, the alphabet soup of ANSI/ASSP standards. Yeah A10 is construction and demolition. You mentioned the A10 11 and A10 37 standards there for personnel and debris nets.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

So it can you know, it can be tough to sift through the alphabet soup. But there's a lot of great information there. You know, when I started here, I didn't know any of this alphabet soup and I thought I would never learn it.

And now I'm just rattling it off, assuming everybody else knows what it is. So yes, absolutely. A10 is the family of standards for all construction, and demolition. Yeah. And like what's interesting about the fall protection standards compared to the A10 standards, the fall protection stands all kind of interlink, right? You can't just have a harness standard.

You have to also have a lanyard standard and you have to have Anchorage. But the construction, you know, trenching and scaffolding and drilled shafts and all these different things really depends on what's going on at your protection particular construction site. But we've got you covered no matter what. Area of that construction. Project you're working on.

Scott Fowler

Right. And speaking of that, and you mentioned, you know, standards being niche specific within these Z359 family of the fall protection standards, it gets even more niche specific if you want. There are, you know, standards that hone in on one particular piece of equipment. You know, which again, makes these such a great resource.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

If you have, you know, whatever pieces of equipment you might have on your jobsite, focus on fall protection. There is a standard related to that that can help guide you in how to help keep workers safe at height. And you might think to yourself, why in the world if you need all these things and fall protection, why are they all separate documents? Can't you have them all together because you need all of them?

Like why, why, why did the committee decide to do that? You could probably come up with all sorts of, reasons why. But in just thinking about this, you know, now you have these standards are revised and updated on a very regular basis. So they have to be done definitely every ten years. It can be sooner than that.

If something happens in the harness world, do I have to wait for the whole standard to get done? What if I want to get the harness information out now, right. I don't want to wait. Or sometimes because having them used to have all of it into one big document. You can imagine with so much technology changing, so many aspects of fall protection changing, whoa.

And then did I mention there's all these different groups who have different interests in how the standard is done? You're trying to come to consensus, would be a challenge. And I can see that really slowing the process down. So I think one of the benefits of having these separate standards for fall protection, in particular, if there's something new coming up with, harnesses, if there's something new coming up with, especially these self-retracting devices, I mean, those have really changed, the last, you know, five, eight years.

So we're keeping up to date with those, and we're not tied to all the other pieces of the fall protection system. So it's a lot. It's a lot, Scott. Holy cow. It's a good thing we're here to help people understand it, because, you need more than a decoder ring sometimes to figure all this out.

Scott Fowler

Exactly. Talking a little bit about these standards compared with OSHA, for example. I mean, a lot of, you know, folks out there may focus on OSHA compliance. You know, what do we need to do to be in compliance with the law relating to whatever it is? You know, how do these anti ANSI/ASSP standards, you know, compare with OSHA? You know, how does how do they help folks go beyond compliance. What's the relationship between the two?

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Yeah absolutely excellent question. Especially for some of our newer safety professionals who are maybe suddenly find themselves in the role of being the safety person on the site. And now what do I do? So OSHA, you have to OSHA is the law. OSHA means you have to do it. So if there's a regulation that talks about confined space, for example, you have to do it.

That's it. You just have to stop. Yeah. Full stop. But that's the minimum. A lot a lot of these standards. So we know that the Osh Act Occupational Safety and Health Act was signed in 1970, and a lot of the regulations, there were standards committees, even the A-10 construction, committee was around before that. So when OSHA really started, they took a lot of those standards that were in, you know, out there in the world at the time and incorporated them and made them part of the law.

But they have not been updated or very few have been updated a long time. Let's talk about lockout tag. Oh, so that is protecting, workers from hazardous energy. So OSHA is saying

you got to put a lock on it because that's what it was, right? You didn't have a lot of the technology at the time. But things have changed.

And so if you have a lot of that technology, that's that next level up, and you want to be able to do things at a higher level, at a more advanced level than that bare minimum basic of OSHA, you would come to the aSSP standards. Okay. What could I do that can take it up a notch? Now the Z244.1 like a tag out standard will still tell you that the best thing to do is a lock.

If you can lock it and get rid of all of that energy, not just electrical energy, all the other aspects gravity, air, all these different things, you can do that with a lock. They say go for it. But there may be other ways. They've got a really great flow chart that says, okay, if this then that. Can I do this?

Can I do it in a different way? Can I use a light curtain? Can I use other devices so that, the mechanic who's got to get a piece out of that machine, because it got jammed? Do I have to go all the way to lock everything out? Maybe. Maybe not. But whatever it is, it still has to keep the person safe, right?

So it does. That doesn't mean you just. Well, it was put a light curtain in. Good luck. So yeah, you got to make sure that's actually going to keep the person safe. And actually the news Z244.1 has some great examples in the appendices of how you can look at, okay, this aspect of it, you still got a lock on it.

There's no question. This one. Yeah. You can do these other things and the person will be safe. So I think I talked in circles on that one. Scott, I want to give you that one for sure. How is it better. So our standards are better. Is it fair to say better? I don't know, it's a next level, Scott.

So let's get that going. Be going beyond competency on compliance. That is the phrase. Right. Because you might do the basics. You might have the OSHA regs in place and you might be following all those rules and you might not be seeing your injury, rates change, you might still be having incident. And that's not to say that implementing any of these standards is going to solve all your problems, because no one can say that.

But maybe you're like, okay, we've done all this round, one kind of stuff. We want to do the next level to make sure people are safe at work. What do I do? Where do I go? You're going to go to ASB and you're going to go to our standards and figure out, okay, what is that next level? I've already done the basic compliance piece.

Scott Fowler

Now, we've talked a lot about the, you know, the standards, the committees. If somebody out there is watching us say, hey, this this sounds like something I'm interested in, I'd like to get involved in, what can they do? How can they how can they become, a part of developing these standards?

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Well, now I'm going to put you on the spot, Scott, because here we are in this video podcast, and I have a link that I could share with you that maybe somehow we could have, like, put it in the in the comments.

=Don't you see videos with that? Like, oh yeah, there's your clip. So I have a link. So because as I've already said, we have so many different standards and I don't know what your particular background is and what you specifically want to get involved in. You would go to this link and you would click okay. I'm interested in, training. I'm interested in the for 490.1. I'm interested in how people learn how to, you know, teach safety. Click, click. Great. And then, our department gets that information and we would get you the correct information. But for both construction and fall protection, they're such huge committees. And they do have a limit to the number of organizations who can participate.

So what they recommend is you get involved in the subcommittees first, and there are 18 Z359 fall protection standards and close to 50 fives, zero, construction and demolition standards. So, based on what you click on, on that, basically it's like a survey based on what you click that you're interested in. Then we'll know what to send to you to get you involved.

To get a little bit in the weeds, those subcommittees, it's easier to get involved more quickly. They're always looking for folks who have that niche, specific knowledge and can help, bring new, new information and make that standard better. Some of the committees, like I said, especially the construction and fall protection, sometimes you have to wait a little while, to be honest, because we do limit the number who can join.

And again, I got to make sure everything's balanced. I can't have everybody in manufacturing and I can't have everybody in labor. So there's a few things that I have to manage on my side. But that shouldn't stop you from being involved. Like I said, there's always groups. But those subcommittees who are looking for new folks, new information.

And that's the beauty of our standards, because they are being revised on a regular basis. Lots is happening right now. I think we all know that, like a lot is changing. Technology is changing. How can we incorporate that in the standards so that we can provide guidance to these safety professionals? To implement these, you know, techniques out in the field, right.

And with, you know, trying to adapt to all those changes in these different industries, is that really where the expertise of the committee members comes in? They're out there in the field. They know what's going on. So that's, you know, what's really helped shaping the standards and making sure there is up to date is possible. You know, we had one committee and there was one guy who would always say, so what?

And I loved it, because if we're just writing a standard and no one uses it, so what right then it's not useful, right? So we got to make sure we got people who are on these committees who have the knowledge. But also it's knowledge. It's going to help people out in the field. So what we've really done in the last handful of years is we've got more folks loosely that I'll call end users.

People were actually using the standards. Does this help you? Is this what you need? Do you need something different? Do you need something expanded? That's been huge because it doesn't help if we just kind of blindly say, hey, go, go do this thing. And and good luck. It's that feedback loop of, oh, okay, this is how you're actually implementing these fall protection programs.

Out in the field, out on these construction sites. Oh, here's a bit of a gap that we could fill in the next revision and continually update and continually improve the standards. So, that's been great to have more than just no offense. The manufacturers. I mean, they obviously care and they're the ones making all this equipment. It's important.

And how is it tested and to what weight limit and how are you testing it? Fantastic. Who's wearing it? Who's using it? Is it actually fit? Do I want to wear it? Do I want to put it on? Is easier just to do it? You know, the quick and easy way. We got to get those groups together. We're doing a lot more of that now. And I think that's just continually improving our standards and obviously making it better for the worker.

Scott Fowler

If folks out there are interested in learning more about a standards, what should they do? Where can we send them?

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Yeah, we can send them, it's a really long address. There's not even a clear thing for me to tell you. So it's, something where you could, reach out to. Honestly, you could. Probably the easiest thing for me to tell you is to reach out to customer service. At SPC, I said ASB, dawg. They're amazing. They know how to find us. Because survey that I mentioned is long and gobbledygook, too. And maybe we could put it on this page, but, they can definitely reach out to me or anybody on my team. We are always looking for new folks, new perspectives to

help participate, and honestly, to help, lead these groups. Right. We have had a lot of folks who have been participating for a long time and have a tremendous amount of knowledge, which is awesome.

But let's get some new folks into our different perspectives, different industries. All of that just makes the standards even better and stronger than they already are. So we're always looking for new people to join. So find me. Go to customer service Thrive. The quickest way to do it on our website. We'll find you. You'll find us.

And speaking of that, I want to throw out another, assp.org/standards where you can learn more and help sift through the alphabet soup we've talked about today from ten to Z10, the Z244 to Z359. You all know what all of those things mean. So visit assp.org/standards. And Lauren, I will, I'll give you the last word.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

Scott, I, I'm excited for this next evolution of the podcast. I think that, seeing our expression, I mean, you know, I could talk about standards for forever and I love doing it. And, so I think this is going to be a really exciting time to really, hear and see what people are doing out in industry with our standards, with safety.

So kudos to you and the team for doing that. And just encourage, all of our listeners and watchers, viewers, I guess, is the right word. Yeah. Get involved. Give us your feedback. We always want to hear from you. And, if you have questions or, you know, want to know more, please reach out. We're always looking for your feedback.

Scott Fowler

All right, well, thank you so much again, Lauren, it is always a pleasure speaking with you and talking about standards. As we've said. You know, these are such a tremendous resource for employers, safety professionals, across you really in any industry. So really appreciate you taking the time to share how they can, save you for finals out there, can use them to improve conditions at their workplaces and helping us kick off this new era of the case for safety. So thank you so much again.

Lauren Bauerschmidt

You are welcome.

Scott Fowler

Thank you for tuning in. Be sure to like and subscribe and we'll see you back here in two weeks.