

Z10 COMMITTEE

AN ANSI/ASSP STANDARDS COMMITTEE
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
520 N. Northwest Highway • Park Ridge, IL 60068
847/699-2929 - Phone

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Z10 Issues and Comparison to the OSHA Safety Champions Program

The ANSI/ASSP Z10 Standard and the [OSHA Safety Champions Program](#) (launched in early 2026) are both voluntary frameworks designed to move organizations beyond minimum compliance toward proactive safety management. The OSHA Program addresses:

The Safety Champions Program is a new program for employers to develop and implement an effective safety and health program. The main goal of safety and health programs is to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths. The Program incorporates the seven core elements of [Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs](#).

There have been questions addressing the OSHA program and comparisons to the ANSI/ASSP Z10.0 Standard and the ANSI/ASSP/ISO/IEC 45001 Standard;

ANSI/ASSP Z10.0 is a comprehensive, systems-based standard that provides flexibility in tailoring its requirements to your organization's safety and health risks. ISO 45001 offers guidance on establishing, implementing and maintaining an OSH management system to improve occupational safety and health, minimize risks and eliminate hazards.

While they, [OSHA initiative and the consensus standards] share core values like leadership commitment and worker participation, they differ significantly in structure, focus, and implementation methods.

Z10 reviewers have noted their opinion that the American National Standard provides a much more comprehensive and proactive standard. The committee also felt that while the Champions Program is a good starting point, implementing the Z10 Standard will generate more and tangible organizational benefits.

Core Differences

Feature	ANSI/ASSP Z10.0-2019	OSHA Safety Champions Program
Primary Focus	Systems-Based: Focuses on an Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) and its strategic integration with business	Program-Based: Provides a structured roadmap for developing and implementing an effective safety and health

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	processes with a focus on occupational safety and health excellence and not compliance.	<i>program</i> based on specific OSHA practices.
Origin/Authority	Developed by a private non-profit (ANSI) and professional society (ASSP) through industry consensus. American National Standards are respected and accepted both nationally and globally.	Developed by a federal government agency (OSHA) based on its "Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs".
Structure	Uses the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and is highly aligned with international standards like ISO 45001. This approach is consistent with business and organizational practices both nationally and globally.	Follows Seven Core Elements (Management Leadership, Worker Participation, etc.) through three progressive steps.
Implementation	Scalable and self-evaluated; often involves formal audits and management reviews as part of the system. The goal and intent is implement the standard. consistent with other business and organizational practices and processes.	Self-guided steps (Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced) that participants complete at their own pace. Goal is on evaluation versus compliance.
External Support	Organizations typically rely on internal/external evaluations or third-party consultants for conformance.	Participants can request a Special Government Employee (SGE) to assess their program and progress at any time.

Key Highlights of Each

- **ANSI/ASSP Z10:** This standard emphasizes "systems thinking" looking at how safety processes interact with other business functions. It includes broader health considerations, such as psychosocial risks and ergonomics, and requires direct worker involvement in setting acceptable risk levels. This approach addresses the importance of occupational safety and health management to an organization as opposed to compliance with safety and health regulations.
- **OSHA Safety Champions Program:** This 2026 initiative is designed to help employers strengthen programs *before* inspections occur. It is particularly focused on proactive

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compliance, helping organizations identify gaps in areas like machine guarding, safety labeling, and training documentation.

Which to Choose?

- Choose ANSI/ASSP Z10 if your goal is to build a high-level comprehensive management system compatible with international standards (ISO) or to integrate safety into overall business and organizational strategy.
- Choose OSHA Safety Champions if you are looking for a free, government-backed roadmap to verify that your safety program meets federal best practices and to prepare for potential future inspections.

Give examples of how ANSI/ASSP Z10 is more systems-oriented than the OSHA program

ANSI/ASSP Z10 is more systems-oriented than the OSHA Safety Champions program because it treats safety as an interdependent business function rather than a standalone checklist. The goal is on occupational safety and health excellence based on more than just regulatory compliance.

While the OSHA program provides a "roadmap" for specific practices, Z10 focuses on the architectural framework that integrates these practices into overall organizational management.

Key examples of this systems-oriented approach include:

- Integration with Business Standards: Z10 is designed to align with broader business management systems like ISO 9001 (Quality) and ISO 14001 (Environment). For example, a Z10 system might coordinate toxic chemical elimination as both an environmental and a safety objective simultaneously. Integration and synergy is viewed as a critical component of occupational safety and health excellence.
- "Management Review" Requirements: Unlike basic programs, Z10 mandates formal management reviews and internal audits to evaluate the system's overall effectiveness. This ensures safety performance is reviewed by senior leadership in the same way they review financial or production data.
- Strategic Planning and Context: Z10 requires organizations to consider their "Context," assessing how external factors (like industry trends) and internal factors (like workforce demographics) impact safety. This goes beyond the OSHA program's focus.
- Formal Management of Change (MOC): A core systems feature of Z10 is its structured framework for evaluating and controlling change before it occurs. The OSHA program

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lacks this documented, systematic MOC requirement, which is critical for organizations with frequent operational shifts.

- Focus on Organizational Learning: Z10.0-2019 treats learning as a long-term asset, requiring systems to analyze not just what went wrong (incidents), but also what went well. This "systems thinking" approach focuses on organizational resilience rather than just programmatic compliance.

Give examples of how Z10's management of change differs from OSHA's

While both frameworks address organizational changes,

ANSI/ASSP Z10-2019 treats Management of Change (MOC) as a rigorous, system-wide requirement, whereas the OSHA Safety Champions Program (launched in 2026) approaches it as a recommended practice for hazard control. Z10 believes that management of change is critical to moving occupational safety and health excellence forward to positively impact the organizational bottomline.

Key differences in their MOC execution include:

1. Scope of Triggers

- ANSI/ASSP Z10: Requires a formal review for change that could impact health and safety, including organizational changes (e.g., mergers, staffing levels, or budget cuts) and new business opportunities. It views changes in leadership or company structure as potential systemic risks.
- OSHA Safety Champions: Primarily focuses on operational changes, such as new equipment, modified tasks, or the introduction of new chemicals. It treats MOC as a way to ensure that "hazard identification and assessment" stays current.

2. Pre-Implementation Review

- ANSI/ASSP Z10: Mandates that a risk assessment be completed before a change is implemented to prevent the introduction of new hazards into the system. This "Plan-Do-Check-Act" integration ensures safety is part of the design phase, not a reaction to the change.
- OSHA Safety Champions: Encourages identifying gaps in compliance "before inspections occur". While it advocates for proactive hazard identification, its structure is designed to help employers strengthen existing programs rather than enforcing a strict "no-change-without-prior-review" gatekeeping system

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3. Strategic Integration

- ANSI/ASSP Z10: Integrates MOC with procurement and contracting. For example, if a company changes a chemical supplier or hires a new contractor, Z10 requires a systematic evaluation of how that external change affects the internal safety system, which is viewed as a critical component of organizational safety excellence..
- OSHA Safety Champions: Focuses on communication and coordination among host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies to ensure all parties are protected under the existing safety program. It ensures that contractors are aware of the host's safety rules but does not typically require the host to re-evaluate its entire management system because of a new contractor.
- Small employer utilization: Some observers have noted the OSHA Champions Program may have utility for small employers. However, there is a Z10 small employers implementation guide available on a complimentary basis through ASSP. The guide has been distributed to over 10,000 interested parties.

4. Documentation and Accountability

- ANSI/ASSP Z10: Requires documented evidence of the MOC process, including technical reasons for the change, authorization, and proof that affected workers were trained *before* the change took effect.
- OSHA Safety Champions: Emphasizes self-guided progress through three levels (Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced). While it stresses that training must be "verifiable," the focus is on achieving programmatic milestones rather than maintaining the strict administrative "paper trail" required by a formal ISO-aligned system.

ISO 45001 Issues and Comparison

Is a voluntary international standard requiring a proactive, top-management-driven, and risk-based occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system suitable for global certification. In contrast, OSHA safety programs (like the Voluntary Protection Programs, VPP) focus on legal compliance, hazard mitigation, and meeting specific U.S. federal regulatory requirements. ISO 45001 is a framework for continuous improvement, while OSHA is a regulatory enforcement body.

Key Differences Between ISO 45001 and OSHA Safety Initiatives

The ISO 45001 standard and the 2026 OSHA Safety Champions Program are both proactive safety management frameworks, but they differ significantly in their structure, scope, and certification process.

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Core Framework Differences

- ISO 45001: A global, certifiable international standard that uses a high-level structure (Annex SL) common to other ISO standards (like ISO 9001 and 14001). It focuses on integrating safety into the organization's core business environment and strategic planning.
- Safety Champions Program: A voluntary, self-guided initiative launched by OSHA in January 2026. It is built specifically on OSHA's Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs, emphasizing seven core elements: management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification, hazard prevention, education, program evaluation, and multi-employer coordination.

Program Structure and Progression

- ISO 45001: Follows a continuous Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. Organizations typically undergo a rigorous gap analysis followed by an external audit by an accredited body to achieve certification.
- Safety Champions Program: Features a three-step progressive structure (Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced). Participants can work at their own pace through these levels to mature their safety culture.

Verification and Support

- ISO 45001: Requires independent third-party audits for formal certification. It does not typically involve direct government assessment during the implementation phase.
- Safety Champions Program: Participants can request a Special Government Employee (SGE)—an experienced safety professional—to assess their safety program and step progress. This provides a direct feedback loop from OSHA-authorized experts without being an enforcement-driven inspection.

Scope and Applicability

- ISO 45001: Applies broadly to the entire supply chain, including contractors and external providers, and focuses on both risks and opportunities for improvement.
- Safety Champions Program: While it also covers coordination with contractors and staffing agencies, it is designed as a practical roadmap for U.S. employers to go beyond minimum compliance and avoid future enforcement actions.

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- Approach to Risk: ISO 45001 emphasizes a proactive approach, requiring identification of risks and opportunities to prevent accidents. OSHA's primary focus is on identifying and controlling existing hazards to meet regulatory compliance.

Feature	ISO 45001	OSHA Safety Champions (2026)
Nature	Global International Standard	Voluntary U.S. Agency Program
Structure	Annex SL (HLS) / PDCA	3-Step (Intro, Inter, Adv)
Core Goal	Strategic Business Integration	Practical Program Implementation
Assessment	Third-party accredited auditor	Special Government Employee (SGE)
Focus	Risk & Opportunity	7 Recommended Practices

- Management Commitment: ISO 45001 demands active leadership involvement, discouraging the delegation of safety responsibility. OSHA programs, particularly VPP, emphasize management commitment, but within a framework of meeting mandatory compliance standards.
- Structure and Integration: ISO 45001 uses the Annex SL structure, which makes it easily integrated with other systems like ISO 9001 (Quality) and ISO 14001 (Environment). OSHA safety programs are focused solely on health and safety compliance.
- Scope: ISO 45001 covers a wide range of factors, including the context of the organization, the needs of interested parties, and worker participation. OSHA programs are generally focused on compliance within the U.S. legal framework.
- Certification: ISO 45001 is a voluntary standard that leads to internationally recognized certification. OSHA VPP is a recognition program for safety excellence, but is not an international certification.

ISO 45001 is designed to improve overall performance, while OSHA programs ensure that a company meets minimum legal safety standards and, at higher levels (like VPP), promotes voluntary improvement.

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Conclusion:

The ANSI/ASSP Z10 and ISO 45001 standards are stronger and more comprehensive as occupational health and safety management systems (OHSMS) compared to the new OSHA Safety Champions Program. While the OSHA Safety Champions Program is a valuable, free, voluntary, and stepped guide (introduced in 2026) for building foundational safety, Z10 and ISO 45001 provide rigorous, internationally recognized, or national consensus frameworks with higher requirements for risk control, management of change, and system auditing.

Management Systems Resources:

[ANSI/ASSP Z10.0 - 2019 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems](#)

[ASSP GM-Z10.100-2024 Guidance & Implementation ANSI/ASSP Z10.0-2019](#)

[ASSP GM - Z10.101-2019: Guidance Manual for Smaller Organizations](#)

- More Information on Z10

[Podcast #19: Z10 and Safety Management](#)

[Podcast #27: Z10 Update: Learn what's new with the Z10 Standard](#)

[ANSI/AIHA/ASSE Z10-2012: An Overview of the Occupational Health & Safety - Management Systems Standard](#)

[Major Risk: Moving From Symptoms to Systems Thinking](#)

- ISO 45001 Resources:

[ANSI/ASSP/ISO 45001-2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems - Requirements with Guidance for Use](#)

[ASSP/ISO TR-45001-2021 OHSMS – Small Organizations](#)

[ASSP/ISO TR-45002-2023 OHSMS - Implementation of ISO 45001-2018](#)

[ANSI/ASSP/ISO 45003-2021 OHSMS–Guidelines for Managing Psychosocial Risks](#)

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[ASSP/ISO TR-45004-2024 OHSMS Guidelines on Performance Evaluation](#)

[More Information on ISO 45001](#)

[ISO Five-Step Action Plan for Safety Management](#)

[Podcast #6: ISO 45001](#)

[Managing Ergonomics: Applying ISO 45001 as a Model](#)

- Management Systems

[How to Select the Best Safety Management System](#)

[Management System Standard Comparison](#)

[How to Select the Best Safety Management System Date](#)

[Safety Management Systems](#)

[ISO 45001 - The Gold Standard for Safety Management](#)