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How Will the New ANSI Z-10 Standard Affect your HSE Management Systems Program?

G. Michaud and J. Johnstone - Contek Solutions LLC

On July 25, 2005, ANSI approved the new ANSI/AIHA Z10-2005 management system standard for safety. ANSI Z10 is a tool to provide corporations with a standard for continuous improvement and minimize risk in the workplace. It is a voluntary management system consistent with ISO 9000 and 14000, and is flexible enough for easy integration with other management systems e.g. Six Sigma.

The new standard will greatly change how safety is implemented at many corporations. Interestingly, though, many corporations have already instituted their own safety management system programs in the early 1990s. How will these existing programs fit with the new standard? Will companies have to make drastic changes in their HSE management systems?

The first step is to compare the new ANSI Z-10 standard with your company's present HSE management systems. You will more than likely find that there are many differences between your present program with 9-13 elements and the seven elements of the new ANSI Z-10 standard.

The new ANSI Z-10 standard is based on classic "Peter Drucker" quality principles of "Plan-Do-Study-Act." Like many HSE management system program, the new standard provides organizations with a tool for continuous improvement. The underlying goal of the standard is to reduce injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

Let's take a quick look at the seven different topics contained in the standard:

1. Scope, Purpose and Application:

The underlying principles of the new standard are discussed in this section. The standard places an obligation on the HSE professional working to establish management system standards to be familiar with the standard's provisions.

2. Definitions

Be sure to focus here on the definitions for many of the classic terms such as "risk" and even "hazard." These definitions form the basis for the provisions set down by the standard.

3. Management Leadership and Employee Participation

The standard places the responsibility for the Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) directly on the shoulders of management. Top management must direct the development, implementation and maintenance of the OHSMS. Top management will provide leadership. The standard also emphasizes that there must be effective participation at all levels in the OHSMS. But, again, it falls onto the “organization” to accomplish this.

4. Planning

Planning by ANSI Z-10 is described as the process to “...identify and prioritize OHSMS issues.” The “issues” are further defined as hazards, risks, OHSMS deficiencies, and improvement opportunities. The emphasis is on determining the hazards, risks, prioritizing and making corrective measures to ameliorate those risks. Classic process safety principles to reduce hazards and risk are emphasized in this section.

5. Implementation and Operation

This section covers hierarchy of controls, design review and management of change; procurement, contractors, emergency preparedness, training, communications, and documentation & record control process. Many of these items are found in most company’s OHSMS. These items listed above are very familiar to the HSE professional. Hierarchy of controls, as described by the standard, means that companies “shall” employ the classic risk reduction steps through elimination, substitution, engineering, warnings, administrative controls and PPE. The documentation & record control process are designed to fit in the ISO 9000 and 14001.

6. Evaluation & Corrective Actions

Section 6 covers monitoring, measurement, incident investigations, audits, corrective and preventive actions, and feedback to the planning process. This section also directs the user to take corrective actions when any deficiencies are found. Remember that ANSI Z-10 is a management system standard, and inherently views things from a very high level. For instance, the “audits” are for auditing the OHSMS to make sure it is in compliance with ANSI Z-10.

7. Management Review

The last section of the document requires that management continue to participate in the process continuing to address issues for improvement. The standard states that management must review the OHSMS at least annually and take the appropriate actions.

So how will your present EHS management systems fit in with the ANSI Z-10 standard? What are the next steps that you should take?

Perhaps the first question to be answered is if your company desires to comply with the standard. The standard has been designed to harmonize with the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 series. Will this standard be adopted by the ISO? BSA 18001 never has been. However, ANSI Z-10 represents the current “best practice.” It is very possible that a similar ISO standard would be based on the ANSI Z-10 standard.

If you decide to meet the ANSI Z-10 standard, the next step would be to conduct a gap analysis between your present management systems and the ANSI Z-10 standard. Then, you would need to follow the classic steps of updating and modifying your present practices to implement ANSI Z-10.

A copy of the new standard can be ordered at www.ansi.org.