OSH Training Standard Revised

The latest revision to ANSI/ASSE Z490.1 is now available. ANSI/ASSE Z490.1-2016 applies to a broad range of training and training programs, and specifies how to adequately design, develop, deliver and evaluate training. Previous versions of the standard (2003, 2009) have been widely used across many industries and in both the public and private sector. The committee reports that on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, this revision registers about a 6 due to significant changes that the standard much stronger than past versions.

Broad Application
Training is an important element of an effective overall OSH program. Historically, OSH training has been specifically addressed in only a few regulations, such as asbestos, hazard communication and storm water management, and then only with a limited scope. In most cases, the regulations specify what technical topics to cover, but do not stipulate how to adequately design, develop, deliver and evaluate training.

Z490.1-2016 covers all facets of training, from development, delivery, evaluation to management of training and training programs. Thus, the criteria were developed by combining accepted practices in the training industry with those in OSH. The standard is intended to apply to a broad range of training and training programs.

Z490 in Practice
An organization may use the standard in several ways:
• Industry employers might use it to assess external training providers or to audit or improve internal corporate training programs.
• Training providers can use the standard to assess and improve their training services.
• Corporations can use the standard as a basis for developing and managing training programs.

Governmental regulations specify mandatory requirements for employee training. Likewise, the training program may be embedded in larger safety, human resources or other organizational structures. As a broad-based voluntary consensus standard, the document complements the regulations and organizational policies. However, compliance with this standard does not ensure compliance with governmental regulations or organizational policies, or vice versa.

It is also important to note that this standard provides a 30,000-ft view of OSH training. It was intentionally crafted to be broadly applicable and as a result it does not attempt to address every aspect of OSH training in one document. The standard contains annexes and references that provide additional information and detail.
“Z490 was written to provide a guide for the development and presentation of comprehensive OSH training events,” says Z490 Committee Chair John W. Mroszczyk P.E., CSP, who is president of Northeast Consulting Engineers. “As health, safety and environmental professionals, we have all had the opportunity to conduct compliance training at one time or another. Occasionally we were less than satisfied with either our presentation or with the organization of the training materials. The Z490 is a high-caliber guide you can use to develop, present and evaluate each training event.”

Mroszczyk also says the standard is an effective benchmarking tool. “If one is using a third-party trainer, Z490 can be used as a yardstick to ensure that you are truly getting what your organization requires and what you are paying for,” he explains. “We have now seen many examples of companies looking for third-party validation via Z490.1 and we think this is positive for the OSH profession overall. I use this standard on a consistent basis in my own practice and it gives a solid professional framework to use in creating a quality training product.”

Key Differences: 2009 & 2016 Versions

Section 1: Basic editorial changes were made, but the overall focus and direction of the standard did not change.

Section 2: Some definitions were edited. For example, the definition of a training program was changed based on public feedback since the 2009 version. A definition for virtual learning was added since this aspect of training continues to evolve.

Section 3: This section was extensively changed to shift focus from program coordination to comprehensive management, which requires a different mind-set. These changes will likely be significant for OSH training in the future.

Section 4: This section saw both editorial and substantive changes. It now includes both program and course development. In addition, the committee added language coordinating governmental regulations with the standard.

Section 5: The committee made both substantive and editorial changes to this section as well. The most significant/substantive changes address the requirements for trainer planning and preparation and for managing the learning environment. The committee discussed the topic of how much control trainers have over the actual environment at length and the standard was changed to address part of this dynamic.

Sections 6 and 7: In addition to minor editorial changes, the committee added a brief section on the need for incident investigations.

The annexes were updated and revamped to reflect the changes in the standard as well.

ANSI/ASSE Z490.1-2016
Scope & Application

The Z490 standard establishes criteria for OSH training programs, including development, delivery, evaluation and program management. Its purpose is to provide accepted training practices and it is recommended for voluntary application by OSH training providers. Its contents are as follows:

1) Scope, Purpose and Application
   1.1 Scope
   1.2 Purpose
   1.3 Application

2) Definitions

3) Management of a Comprehensive Training Program
   3.1 Accountability & Responsibility
   3.2 Minimum Training Requirements
   3.3 Resource Management & Administration
   3.4 Program Evaluation

4) Training Program/Course Development
   4.1 Training Development
   4.2 Needs Assessment
   4.3 Learning Objectives
   4.4 Course Design
   4.5 Evaluation Strategy
   4.6 Criteria for Completion
   4.7 Continuous Improvement of the Training Course

5) Training Delivery
   5.1 Trainer Qualifications
   5.2 Training Delivery Methods and Materials

6) Training Evaluation
   6.1 General Criteria
   6.2 Evaluation Approaches
   6.3 Continuous Improvement

7) Documentation and Recordkeeping
   7.1 Systems and Procedure
   7.2 Records
   7.3 Record Confidentiality and Availability
   7.4 Issuing Certificates

Annexes
Preface to Use of Annexes
Annex A References
Annex B Training Course Development Guidelines
Annex C Safety, Health and Environmental Trainer’s Checklist
Annex D Virtual Learning
Virtual Learning

One of the most-discussed topics during the revision process was virtual learning. Some committee members believed the standard should be expanded and a whole series of appendix materials added. Others countered that the topic is too significant and should be the subject of a new consensus standard or technical report.

Ultimately, the committee agreed to launch a new project addressing OSH virtual training. The new standard would apply to all occupational OSH training, whether separate or as a part of other training being given on a virtual basis. BSR/ANSI/ASSE Z490.2-201X, Accepted Practices for Virtual Training in Occupational Safety, Health and Environmental Management, would establish criteria for OSH virtual training programs, including program management, development, delivery, evaluation and documentation. Its purpose would be to provide criteria for accepted practices for OSH training programs delivered via virtual means.

Examples of Recognition

• Best Practices for Development, Delivery and Evaluation of Susan Harwood Training Grants
• OSHA Standards Improvement Project-Phase III; Final Rule
• NIOSH FACE Report 2004-02

• International Union of Operating Engineers

For More Information

ASSE’s website has various documents describing the application and impact. These resources are specific to the 2009 version of Z490.1.

• Referencing Z490.1 in NIOSH Communications (01/16/2003)
• Referencing Z490.1 in OSHA Rulemaking and Web Site Training Materials (10/31/2002)
• ASSE Announces Newly Revised Standard on Accepted Practices in Safety, Health and Environmental Training
• Draft Rulemaking on Silica Standard for General Industry (11/25/03)
• Walking and Working Surfaces; Personal Protective Equipment (Fall Protection Systems)
• ASSE Insight on NIOSH Toolbox Safety Training Study (3/2001)
• Petition To Recognize Revisions of ANSI Voluntary Consensus Standards: Safety Stand Petition
• Use of the Proposed Z490 Voluntary National Consensus Standard to Improve Safety, Health and Environmental Training in Both the Private and Public Sectors: NACOSH Presentation
• List of ASSE’s secretariats

For more information on Z490.1 and the Z490 Accredited Standards Committee, contact ASSE’s Ovidiu Munteanu at (847) 232-2012 or omunteanu@asse.org.

ASSE/ANSI Consensus Standards Links

• ANSI Essential Requirements
• Official Memorandum of Understanding Between OSHA & ANSI
• Office of Management & Budget Circular OMB-A119
• Position Statement on Consensus Standards
• Safeguarding: Are ANSI Standards Really Voluntary?
• What’s the Difference Between an OSHA Rule and an ANSI Standard?
The Communicator Resources

- Training & Communications Information
- International Resource Guide
- Journal of SH&E Research
- Networking Opportunities
- Professional Safety Journal
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