

Using ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 as the Foundation for Fleet Safety Program Evaluations

**Donald L. Cooper, CSP, ARM, ALCM
Superintendent – Safety and Environmental Health
State Farm Insurance
Bloomington, IL**

Introduction

Until ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 – “Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle Operations” was published, safety professionals did not have a universally recognized standard for fleet safety. Without the regulative oversight that is present in other areas of occupational safety, fleet safety is often relegated to the back burner as more pressing regulatory issues demand time and attention. Safety practitioners, especially those with non-regulated passenger car or light vehicle fleets, often have trouble gaining support for a comprehensive fleet safety program.

Using Z15.1 as the template, the safety practitioner can go through a comprehensive program review process and develop action plans for program improvements.

ANSI/ASSE Z15.1

History

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive fleet safety standard in 2000, members of ASSE’s Transportation Practice Specialty sought ASSE board approval to approach ANSI about a new standard. After receiving ANSI approval, the ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 committee was formed in 2001 with members from 35 different organizations. Their efforts resulted in the publication of the new standard which became effective in April 2006.

Consensus Standards and Their Use

Z15.1 is a voluntary consensus standard, and does not carry any regulative or legal power. It can be thought of as a technical standard that reflects best practices that were determined by a balanced committee representing a broad range of views within the safety community. The purpose of ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 is to “provide organizations with a document for the development of policies, procedures, and management processes to control risks with the operation of motor vehicles. It is not intended to be a mandate for use; it has been developed to assist organizations in defining and developing an effective risk management program for their motor vehicle operations.”¹

Key Elements

ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 is organized into has 5 broad areas or “practices” that can set the outline for your fleet safety program evaluation. The practices are:

- Management, Leadership, and Administration
- Operational Environment
- Drivers
- Vehicles
- Incident Reporting and Analysis

These elements may not exactly match up with your own fleet safety program elements, but you can easily rearrange the elements and sub-elements to create an evaluation template that best fits your needs.

Explanatory Information

The standard is arranged with two columns. The left “Standard Requirements” column contains the required and recommended practices that make up the official standard. The right “Explanatory Information” column contains source information and amplifying information that is developed by the standard committee, but is not part of the standard. The current version of Z15 also includes seven appendices that provide sample policies, instructions, and sample incident rate calculations.

Other Model Programs

While ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 is the most widely recognized fleet safety program standard, there are other program guidelines that can be used along with Z15.1 in your program evaluation. In our case, we used the OSHA/NHTSA/NETS guidelines and an industry benchmarking best practice standard to complete our evaluation template.

OSHA/NHTSA/NETS

The OSHA/NHTSA/NETS “Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes” white paper was a joint effort between OSHA, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety. These guidelines present a basic step by step approach for employers to implement an effective fleet safety program. Copies of the guidelines are available through OSHA.²

Other than a couple of industry specific standards, OSHA does not currently have general standards addressing motor vehicle or fleet operations. OSHA does provide a number of other references on its “Motor Vehicle Safety” website.³

Other Programs

Your fleet insurer’s loss control department, trade association, or industry benchmarking partners are always good resources for other guidelines and checklists as you develop the program that best fits your organization. ASSE’s Transportation Practices Specialty and their “TransActions” newsletter is also a good resource to provide valuable resource material.

Program Review Process

Getting Started

After getting copies of the standards and guidelines you will be using, do a side by side comparison for key program elements. These key elements will be the foundation for creating a program evaluation template. Since ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 is the foundation, the program evaluation template’s sections mirror the standard. To conserve space, all of the exhibits only show the first 2 sections of the evaluation template.

	ANSI Z15.1 - Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle operations	OSHA/NHTSA Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes	Benchmark Partner Fleet Safety Program	Current Company Activities
Management, Leadership & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leadership allocates staff & resources to manage and support MV safety program • Written program in place to define organizational requirements for drivers and MV Safety 			
Operational Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Policy – formal policy that establishes expectations • Responsibilities & Accountability defined • Formalized Driver recruitment, selections, assessment • Organizational Driving Safety Rules with consistent discipline • Driver Orientation & Training • Reporting of trends and incidents to executives • Clear and concise communications • Vehicle Specifications – Proper vehicle is selected for intended use • Systematic inspections & Maintenance 			

Exhibit 1. This is the evaluation template before adding other program sources.

Step 2 – Adding in Other Evaluation Sources

The next step in completing the program evaluation template is to add in other evaluation program elements. In exhibit 2, the OSHA/NHTSA/NETS guidelines, and benchmarking partner program elements are arranged where they best align with the Z15.1 categories.

	ANSI Z15.1 - Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle operations	OSHA/NHTSA Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes	Benchmark Partner Fleet Safety Program	Current Company Activities
Management, Leadership & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leadership allocates staff & resources to manage and support MV safety program • Written program in place to define organizational requirements for drivers and MV Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr. Management provides leadership, sets policies, and allocates resources to create a safety culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr. Management commitment and support 	
Operational Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Policy – formal policy that establishes expectations • Responsibilities & Accountability defined • Formalized Driver recruitment, selections, assessment • Organizational Driving Safety Rules with consistent discipline • Driver Orientation & Training • Reporting of trends and incidents to executives • Clear and concise communications • Vehicle Specifications – Proper vehicle is selected for intended use • Systematic inspections & Maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written policies include: alcohol and drug use, mandatory seat belt use, • Provide continuous driver safety training • Review program to ensure compliance with applicable regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment of responsibility & authority • Strong policies & procedures • Effective communication • Mandatory seat belt use 	

Exhibit 2. All program elements are added and the template is ready for use.

Step 3 – Adding in Current Company Activities

Using the evaluation template as a guide, you can now begin a systematic review of fleet safety program elements. Using the explanatory information and appendices of Z15.1 helps to clarify what is required. Keep in mind that this process is more than checking off individual items on the template. The reviewer must look at more than the written programs and determine actual practices throughout the organization.

Step 4 – Identifying the Gaps

After the current company activities column is completed, the analysis phase can now begin. As with any gap analysis, the reviewer looks at two fundamental questions – “what is our current level of activity?”, and “where do we want to be?” ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 is a not a prescriptive standard – it allows a great deal of flexibility for individual companies to determine how to best meet each section’s requirements. The evaluator must be flexible and not apply a “one size fits all” approach when applying the standard.

Exhibit 3 shows a completed evaluation template with the highlighted areas indicating identified gaps. These gaps now provide the foundation for implementation phase of the program.

	ANSI Z15.1 - Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle operations	OSHA/NHTSA Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes	Benchmark Partner Fleet Safety Program	Current Company Activities
Management, Leadership & Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Leadership allocates staff & resources to manage and support MV safety program • Written program in place to define organizational requirements for drivers and MV Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr. Management provides leadership, sets policies, and allocates resources to create a safety culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr. Management commitment and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local manager is responsible for program • Written manual outlines policies and guidelines
Operational Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Policy – formal policy that establishes expectations • Responsibilities & Accountability defined • Formalized Driver recruitment, selections, assessment • Organizational Driving Safety Rules with consistent discipline • Driver Orientation & Training • Reporting of trends and incidents to executives • Clear and concise communications • Vehicle Specifications – Proper vehicle is selected for intended use • Systematic inspections & Maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written policies include: alcohol and drug use, mandatory seat belt use, • Provide continuous driver safety training • Review program to ensure compliance with applicable regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment of responsibility & authority • Strong policies & procedures • Effective communication • Mandatory seat belt use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug & alcohol policy in employee handbook • Seat belt policy in company car operating guide • Driver training offered but, not mandatory • Fleet accident trends reported annually to branch office management only • Vehicles specified from selection list based on use

Highlighted items represent identified gaps

Exhibit 3. Current company activities are added and gaps are identified.

Implementation

Implementing an effective fleet safety program is much more complex than simply creating a task list of “to do” items and setting target implementation dates. Many times the fleet operations branch out into areas of the organization not familiar with traditional safety and health activities, where leadership fails to see the importance of fleet safety initiatives. This is especially true with non regulated fleets.

For example, a passenger car fleet of sales representatives presents an entirely different set of challenges than presented by a regulated, commercial vehicle fleet. It may be difficult to attain buy in from sales leadership because they view driving as an insignificant portion of a sales rep’s duties. In this case, there must be effective education and awareness efforts before this key stakeholder group will be engaged in the process.

Identifying and Educating Stakeholders

Just like the sales leadership example listed above, the safety professional may have to educate and inform key stakeholders, including top level management. Nothing speaks to top level management like dollars, so any education must include a breakdown of past costs, including repair/damage, liability costs and employee injury costs. After presenting costs, the next logical step is to educate stakeholders on the needed control measures identified in your gap analysis. This is where having control measures based on a recognized consensus standard like Z15.1 adds credibility for any recommended actions.

Developing the Implementation Plan

Once the key stakeholders are on board, implementation is similar to any new initiative. Responsibilities and accountabilities need to be developed, milestones created, and regular updates provided to stakeholders through an intentional communications plan.

Completing Program Audits

Once the program is implemented, the safety practitioner's work is not complete – it is just starting. The “Management, Leadership and Administration” section of Z15.1 lists the specific program elements including management program audits. These audits will review the effectiveness of the various safety program elements and identify the changes needed for continual improvement.

Summary

Implementing a new fleet safety program is a lengthy, complex project that requires a significant level of commitment throughout the organization. The ANSI/ASSE Z15.1 standard is a valuable resource to help gain that commitment and provide the framework for program implementation.

References

1. American National Standards Institute/American Society of Safety Engineers (ANSI/ASSE). 2006. *Safe Practices for Motor Vehicle Operations* (ANSI/ASSE Z15.1). Des Plaines, IL,. American Society of Safety Engineers.
2. Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). *Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes*. (Retrieved February 17, 2011.)
(http://www.osha.gov/Publications/motor_vehicle_guide.html)
3. Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). *Safety and Health Topics – Motor Vehicle Safety*. (Retrieved February 17, 2011.)
(<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/motorvehiclesafety/index.html>)