ANSI/ASSP Z359.7-2019

Qualification and Verification Testing of Fall Protection Products

Part of the Fall Protection Code

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Approved American National Standard
ANSI

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American National Standard

Qualification & Verification Testing of Fall Protection Products

Secretariat

American Society of Safety Professionals
520 N. Northwest Highway
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068

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American National Standard

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Foreword

(This Foreword is not a part of American National Standard Z359.7-2019.)

History

This standard was first published in 2011 in an effort to standardize testing of fall protection products labeled according to the Z359 Fall Protection Code. Prior to 2011, the testing requirements for each product and the related test equipment were included within individual product standards. This standard made industry-wide changes to standardize the laboratory equipment, specimens tested, recording and accreditation of the laboratory. The greatest benefit that occurred in 2011 was requiring all testing laboratories, regardless of who owned and operated them, be accredited to ISO 17025. This requirement increased the quality and consistency of testing being conducted and therefore created a process to demonstrate why consumers can have greater confidence in products labeled to Z359 Fall Protection Code standards.

Prior to 2011, testing of Z359 products was not consistent for each product. Each product standard included the test equipment, sampling and test protocols. Significant differences could be found with the standards due to the age differences between the standards. Administratively, this created issues with updating testing requirements, since each standard had to be updated individually, often times with years in between updates. Laboratories were challenged since different testing, recording and sampling requirements existed for some products and not others.

This standard has worked to alleviate many of these issues by having common requirements for all Z359 products. The standard required each laboratory to be accredited to ISO 17025, *General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories*. This standard includes many requirements, but the highlights are:

- calibration of testing equipment (measuring devices, weights used, data recording equipment)
- control of materials
- qualifications of staff
- communication procedures
- adherence to test protocols
- accuracy of testing data
- internal and external quality control audits
- number of specimens tested

This standard covers and is referenced in all Z359 product standards. The goal is that all Z359 products capable of being tested through an ISO accredited laboratory achieve consistent and accurate testing results. This standard works in harmony with the individual Z359 product standards and includes common testing requirements and equipment.

Need for a Standard

The Z359 committee desired to provide a methodology where product manufacturers could bring existing and new innovative products to market within a reasonable amount of time while still maintaining a high level of consumer confidence in the testing of the products. This standard allows manufacturers to test all of their own products and works to minimize conflicts and inconsistencies by requiring all laboratories be accredited to ISO 17025.

During the development of this standard and determining the need for it, there was significant discussion regarding product certification and the use of third-party independent laboratories and third-party product certification bodies. Users of this standard must recognize that this

standard is not a product certification standard. There is a difference between testing of product and certifying of product. Testing of the product is only one part of the certification process. A product has several requirements that are not verified by testing, such as marking of product, labeling and instruction requirements. There is a general misconception that once a product passes the tests, it is certified, and this is not true. Many requirements are not verified through testing and the manufacturer of the product still has a responsibility to verify that all parts of the standard have been met. Currently (and historically), the manufacturer has the responsibility to ensure that a product meets all the requirements of the standard not just the physical tests. This standard does not prohibit a manufacturer from using independent organizations for testing and/or certification of product. This standard allows a manufacturer, through an ISO accredited laboratory, to test fall protection products according to the standard. If the manufacturer makes a self-declaration that the product conforms to the requirements of a Z359 standard, the manufacturer must provide documentation (Declaration of Conformity) to the purchaser that they have tested the product accordingly and also that the product meets all of the related requirements of standard, including labeling and user information requirements. If the product is certified by a third-party certification organization, then the third-party certification organization is responsible for ensuring that the product tested meets all of the design and performance requirements, as well as the labeling and user information, meet the requirements as given in the standard. Third-party certification of a product, as well as ISO 17025 accreditation, includes ongoing surveillance of the manufacturer.

Standard Perspective

This standard is written for manufacturers and laboratories of fall protection products. Although other organizations may benefit from the content within this standard, it is written from an equipment manufacturer and laboratory perspective.

Normative Requirements

This standard uses the single-column format. The normative requirements appear aligned to the left margin. To meet the requirements of this standard, machinery, equipment and process suppliers and users must conform to these normative requirements. These requirements typically use the verb “shall.”

> *NOTE: The informative or explanatory notes in this standard appear indented, in italics, in a reduced font size, which is an effort to provide a visual signal to the reader that this is informative note, not normative text, and is not to be considered part of the requirements of this standard; this text is advisory in nature only. The suppliers and users are not required to conform to the informative note. The informative note is presented in this manner in an attempt to enhance readability and to provide explanation or guidance to the sections they follow.*

Figures

Figures provided in the standard are illustrated to show basic concepts of testing, types of products, examples of labels or other information from the standard. These figures are not to scale, nor do they represent absolute systems and requirements. They are for educational and informational purposes to explain content within a standard.

Suggestions for Improvements

Suggestions for improvements to this standard are welcome. They should be sent to: American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP), 520 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Attention: Z359 Secretariat.

Revisions

The Z359 Committee welcomes proposals for revisions to this standard. Revisions are made to the standard periodically (usually five years from the date of the standard) to incorporate changes that appear necessary or desirable, as demonstrated by experience gained from the application of the standard. Proposals should be as specific as possible, citing the relevant section number(s), the proposed wording and the reason for the proposal. Pertinent documentation would enable the Z359 Committee to process the changes in a timely manner.

Interpretations

Upon a request in writing to the secretariat, the Z359 Committee will render an interpretation of any requirement of the standard. The request for interpretation should be clear, citing the relevant section number(s) and phrased as a request for a clarification of a specific requirement. Oral interpretations are not provided.

No one but the Z359 Committee (through the Z359 Secretariat) is authorized to provide any interpretation of this standard.

Approval

Neither the Z359 Committee nor the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approves, certifies, rates or endorses any item, construction, proprietary device or activity.

Appendices

Appendices are included in most standards to provide the user with additional information related to the subject of the standard. Appendices are not part of the approved standard.

Committee Meetings

Persons wishing to attend a meeting or join the committee should contact the secretariat for information.

Standard Approval

This standard was processed and approved for submittal to ANSI by the Z359 Secretariat. Approval of the standard does not necessarily imply (nor is it required) that all committee members voted for its approval. At the time this standard was approved, the Z359 Committee had the following members:

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Ovidiu Munteanu, Secretary
Timothy Fisher, CSP, CHMM, CPEA, CAE, ARM, STS, Assistant Secretary
Jennie Dalesandro, Administrative Technical Support

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