

## **AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS URGE OSHA RULE BE WITHDRAWN**

**Des Plaines, IL (January 14, 2008)** — DES PLAINES, IL (January 14, 2008) – In a letter sent today, American Society of Safety Engineers' (ASSE) President Michael J. Thompson, CSP, urged Assistant Secretary of Labor Edwin G. Foulke, Jr., to withdraw the Direct Final Rule "Updating OSHA Consensus Standards Based on National Consensus Standards" published December 14, 2007 (72 FR 71061).

"The proposed amendments to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards in this rulemaking go beyond the stated purpose of simply removing 'references to outdated consensus standards that have requirements that duplicate, or are comparable to, the requirements specified by other OSHA rules'," Thompson said. "The proposed amendments are inappropriate and, if adopted, would significantly impact the relevant standards' effectiveness in protecting workers from occupational risks."

Thompson noted that in this direct final rule a proposal to get rid of obsolete or difficult to obtain consensus standards where other standards adequately protect workers would, at first glance, appear to make sense and be consistent with the mandate to use technical standards as a means to carry out OSHA's policy objectives.

"However, this direct final rule fails to meet the mandate of Public Law 104-113 to "use technical standards that are developed or adopted by voluntary consensus standards bodies" because OSHA has failed to go one necessary step further by referencing the most current voluntary national consensus standards that are available from those bodies," Thompson said.

The work needed to comply fully with Public Law 104-113 is only partly done, he noted, and can be completed by withdrawing this direct final rule.

Thompson said ASSE has long advocated the use of occupational safety and health consensus standards by federal agencies like OSHA, as stated in its "Position Statement on the Role of Consensus Standards in Occupational Safety and Health." Thompson also said other governmental agencies should be encouraged to utilize these consensus standards – in accordance with "The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995," and the Office of Management and Budget's "Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity Assessment Activities" – as they provide an efficient alternative to traditional public sector rule making.

Founded in 1911, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the largest and oldest professional safety organization and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. Its more than 31,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor and education. For more information and ASSE's specific comments on the actions OSHA proposed please go to [www.asse.org](http://www.asse.org).