

Technical Briefing Note

Subject	Date Issued	Revision
Australian Standard - Status on AS/ NZS1891 Series Review	17 Nov 2017	Rev 1

OVERVIEW

The SF015 Committee of Standards Australia is responsible for the development and ongoing management of the Australian Standards relating to safe working at height. There are currently three major projects facing the committee. These relate to:-

- the update of the AS1891 Series of Standards (Parts 1 to 3 being manufacturing and testing Standards and Part 4 being the safe use and maintenance Standard)
- the proposed review of AS/NZS5532 (2013) - the manufacturing and testing Standard for single point anchors and,
- the future of AS4488 (1997) - the current selection use and maintenance Standard for rope access activities.

We need to look at each of these projects and understand their interconnection.

AS/NZS1891 Series - Current Status

This series currently comprises three Standards covering the manufacturing and testing Standards for industrial fall arrest equipment as follows:-

- Part 1 (2001) - Fall arrest harnesses and lanyards
- Part 2 (1997) - Horizontal & Vertical Lifeline Systems (in two sections)
- Part 3 (1997) - Fall Arrest Devices

As witnessed by the dates on the Standards, much has changed in the market since these were released.

The fourth Standard in the series is Part 4 (2009) - the Safe Use and Maintenance Standard. This Standard currently matches the technology and product specifications as defined in the manufacturing and testing standards - completing the matching series.

The circulation and use of AS/NZS1891 Parts 1 to 3 is generally limited to product manufacturers wishing to access the Australia and New Zealand markets.

However, AS/NZS1891.4 is a much wider read document and is referenced not only by users but by their supporting management, safe working at height training organisations as well as the Regulators and the workplace legal fraternity.

It is critically important that any changes in product design, manufacturing and testing Standards are reflected into the user Standard. Even issues such as changed product labelling requirements need to be simultaneously transferred into the user marketplace.

AS/NZS1891 Series - Current Work in Progress

There is a clear requirement to review product design, manufacturing and testing Standards against changes in technology, raw materials and workplace experience. Some of the manufacturing and testing Standards are now 20 years old!!

Some 2 years ago, the SF015 Committee submitted proposals to Standards Australia for a review of the manufacturing and testing Standards - acknowledging that any changes would have to be promptly reflected into the Safe Use and Maintenance Standard.

These submissions were accepted and work commenced on the upgrade of the manufacturing and testing Standards.

Since the original issue of the various parts of the 1891 Series of manufacturing and testing standards, much has changed in the manufacturing arena - and much more has been learned about managing safe working at height - both in Australia / New Zealand and globally.

These changes in technology and the global market place required the SF015 Committee to review more recent international standards and to consider their possible adoption - completely or in part - into a revised and updated series of Australian Standards.

In addition, the SF015 Committee developed and registered a “Philosophy of Testing” document for internal committee use. This will be an ongoing reference document against which the testing criteria for all products will be measured to ensure consistency across those products. The document also takes into consideration current thinking on what is “reasonably foreseeable” in terms of possible product mis-use.

It is currently proposed that the new - but as yet unreleased - Standards take a new format as follows:-

- Part 1 - Harnesses**
- Part 2 - HLL and rail systems**
- Part 3 - Fall Arrest devices**
- Part 5 - Lanyards & Pole Straps**
- Part 6 - Ancillary Equipment**

As close as possible to the release of these new Standards, it is proposed that:-

Part 4 - Safe use and maintenance

be revised to reflect the changes in the manufacturing and testing Standard.

Also under consideration is the review of the current AS/NZS5532 Single Point Anchor manufacturing and testing Standard and releasing that Standard as part of the 1891 Series being:-

Part 7 - Single Point Anchors

Of major concern - to the SF015 Committee, to manufacturers, to users and to regulators - is any possible “disconnect” between the current Part 4 and the new manufacturing and testing Standards.

This may require the bringing forward and expediting of the development of the revised Part 4 and the with-holding of the release of the other 6 parts until all can be released simultaneously.

AS/NZS5532 (2013) - Status Report

The single Point Anchor manufacturing and testing Standard was developed by the SF015 Committee and was issued, after two rounds of Public Comment, in October 2013. After the release of the standard, a number of areas of concern were expressed by some single point anchor manufacturers and other industry groups, relating to the specified testing requirements in the standard.

Following a public forum - arranged by Standards Australia in February 2015 - on the raised technical issues within the Standard, a submission was developed, lodged and approved by Standards Australia for a review of specific sections of the published Standard.

(See document "Information on Australian Standards AS 1891.4 2009 and AS NZS 3013" available on the Standards Australia website.)

This review has now been scheduled to commence after completion of the review of AS/NZS1891 Parts 1,2,3,5 and 6 by the SF015 Committee - possibly later this year.

On completion of the AS/NZS5532 review process a final decision will be made on the possibility of numbering the Standard as AS/NZS1891.7).

AS4488 (1997) - Status Report

The rope access user Standards AS4488 Parts 1 and 2 are considered by the Australian rope access fraternity (IRATA and ARAA) to be obsolete. Their request to have it made obsolete and replaced with the adoption of ISO 22846 was rejected by the SF015 Committee on the basis that the existing Standard covered some ancillary equipment - e.g. helmets.

AS4488 Parts 1 and 2 have now been renewed for a 2 year period while appropriate equipment in AS4488 will be added to AS/NZS1891.6 - Ancillary Equipment.

At that point, ISO 22846 will be adopted and AS4488 will be made obsolete.