

# Preview: What To Expect From The FALL ARREST STANDARD AS/NZS 1891 Draft Next Month

*Photo: Defender Rail installed at Queensland University of Technology (QUT)*

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In just weeks, the draft revision of one of Australia's most important height safety standards, AS/NZS 1891 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices, is expected to be open for public comment. To help you prepare with a sneak peek, Workplace Access & Safety chatted with William Woods, Chair of the committee responsible for the review.

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It's not quite accurate to call AS/NZS 1891 a standard (although we will here for simplicity's sake). Technically, it is a series. The current AS/NZS 1891 comprises four parts and a more recent "manufacturing" standard, AS/NZS 5532:

- 1891.1 Part 1: Harness and ancillary equipment
- 1891.2 Part 2: Horizontal lifeline and rail systems
- 1891.2 Supp1 Supplement 1: Horizontal lifeline and rail systems— Prescribed configurations for horizontal lifelines
- 1891.3 Part 3: Fall-arrest devices
- 1891.4 Part 4: Selection, use and maintenance
- AS/NZS 5532:2013, Manufacturing requirements for single point anchor devices used for harness-based work at height

### **The review process**

Not all the parts are being reviewed at once. Mr Woods says the committee hopes to seek public comment in June for the drafts of Parts 1, 3 and 5. While not ready for public comment, the committee is also working on Part 2.

The manufacturing standard, AS/NZS 5532, is not currently under review but it is in the pipeline of work. The committee has agreed on a set of principles that will guide any changes and is "mindful of the work needed to be done on it when deliberating on other standards."



**New: Parts 5 and 6, possibly 7**

The draft revision will extend beyond Parts 1 to 4 with new Parts 5 and 6, as well as the possibility of Part 7.

The extent of the equipment that will be covered by Part 6 is not completely settled but may include the hardware that workers normally associate with harnesses and lanyards as well as some of the equipment that is covered currently in AS/NZS 4488.2. While Part 7 could simply be the new name for a revised AS/NZS 5532, and Part 5 will deal with lanyards and pole straps.

**Parts 2 and 3: “Deemed to comply” aligns with international standards**

The heart of AS/NZS 1891, Parts 2 and 3, will become “deemed to comply” sections. That is, Parts 2 and 3 will allow compliance with particular international standards to satisfy Australian Standards provided they also meet some AS/NZS specific requirements.

**AS/NZS 1891 no longer a “fall arrest” series**

Interestingly, the title of AS/NZS 1891 may well also change. Currently known as *Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices*, it may be renamed to incorporate the phrase “personal protective equipment”, reflecting a move to cover fall protection rather than just fall arrest while isolating its coverage from other means of controlling the risk of falls from height.

Mr Woods said the Standards Committee wants people to provide comment on both what they see requires to be altered but also on what they see as an improvement on past standards.

Workplace Access & Safety urges everyone who relies on AS/NZS 1891 as a benchmark for compliance to read and comment on the draft revisions once they become available for public comment.



**About the Author:**

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Carl Sachs is the managing director and falls prevention specialist at Workplace Access & Safety, and takes an active role in the development of fall prevention standards. Mr Sachs was a member of the committee responsible for the revision the original AS 1657 and represents the Facility Management Association (FMA) on committees responsible for amending key Australian Standards dealing with working at heights, AS/NZS 1891 and AS/NZS 5532.

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