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EN ISO 374



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The Facts About Standards, Regulations and Protection Claims

Understand the difference between EN Standards and Australian/New Zealand Standards

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THE FACTS ABOUT STANDARDS, REGULATIONS AND PROTECTION CLAIMS

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND STANDARDS (AS/NZS) VS. EUROPEAN UNION (EN) STANDARDS

Many countries across the Asia-Pacific region have adopted the established EN standards for their own use. As a result, they have implemented a number of identical standards to those used in Europe.

While the majority of the Australian/New Zealand occupational glove standards are identical to the European standards, there are instances where the European standard has been revised, but the Australian/New Zealand standard has not been updated.

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND STANDARDS (AS/NZS)

Last updated in 2008, the Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS) for occupational protective gloves are detailed in AS/NZS 2161.

AS/NZS consists of various sections:

Part 1	Selection, use and maintenance (updated in 2016)
Part 2	General requirements
Part 3	Protection against mechanical risks
Part 4	Protection against thermal risks (heat and fire)
Part 5	Protection against cold
Part 6	Protective gloves for firefighters — Laboratory test methods and performance requirements
Part 7	Protection against cuts and stabs by hand knives
Part 8	Protection against ionizing radiation and radioactive contamination
Part 9	Method of measurement and evaluation of the vibration transmissibility of gloves at the palm of the hand
Part 10	Protective gloves against chemicals and micro-organisms

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How do the Australian and New Zealand Standards align to the European Norms (EN)?

- › For the main categories of protection, the AS/NZS refers to an EN standard completely. For example, in the commonly referenced AS/NZS 2161 Part 3, which deals with protection against mechanical risks, it states: "... (the standard) 'is identical with and has been reproduced from EN 388:2003, Protective gloves against mechanical risk.'"
- › This applies to all parts of AS/NZS2161:

EN		AS/NZS	
374	Protective gloves against chemicals and micro-organisms	2161 2161.10	Occupational protective gloves Protective gloves against chemicals and micro-organisms
388	Protective gloves against mechanical risks	2161 2161.3	Occupational protective gloves Protection against mechanical risks
407	Protective gloves against thermal hazards (heat and/or fire)	2161.4	Protection against thermal risks (heat and fire)
421	Protective gloves against ionizing radiation and radioactive contamination	2161.8	Protection against ionizing radiation and radioactive contamination
511	Protective gloves against cold	2161.5	Protection against cold
659	Protective gloves for firefighters	2161.6	Protective gloves for firefighters — Laboratory test methods and performance requirements
1082	Protective clothing — Gloves and arm guards protecting against cuts and stabs by hand knives	2161.7	Protection against cuts and stabs by hand knives
10819	Mechanical vibration and shock — Hand-arm vibration — Method for the measurement and evaluation of the vibration transmissibility of gloves at the palm of the hand	2161.9	Method for the measurement and evaluation of the vibration transmissibility of gloves at the palm of the hand

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How do the EN and AS/NZS testing requirements differ?

- › The European PPE legislation requires glove manufacturers to have products certified (except for products that are designed to protect from minimal risk) by specific dedicated Notified Bodies. The European standards provide “presumption of conformity” to the European PPE legislation and are therefore considered as the state of the art and to some extent a must to certify products.
- › This is not the case in Australia where Australian Standards are not legally binding on manufacturers.
- › The Australian Standard varies from the European standard, in that AS/NZS 2161 does not require a manufacturer, importer, distributor or supplier of protective gloves in Australia to undertake certified testing to claim compliance.
- › Ansell recommends that people involved in the selection and purchase of gloves are aware of this difference, and speak with manufacturers and suppliers about the quality and testing regimes in place.

When the European Standards EN 388 and EN 374 changed in 2016, what did this mean for the Australian and New Zealand Standard?

- › The current version of AS/NZS 2161 for Protective Gloves was last updated in detail in 2008, and is still based on the old editions of the EN standards. Today the key areas of the standard dealing with the various protection types (mechanical, chemical, thermal, etc.) are written to match the prevailing EN standards of 2003 and 2004.
- › However, both the mechanical standard EN 388 and chemical protection standard EN 374 were updated in 2016, but the AS/NZS sections have not yet been updated to match.
- › This means that Australian and New Zealand protection standards for cut, abrasion and impact have not been modernised to today’s needs.

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What does this mean for people who select protective gloves?

- › Today, manufacturers are starting to update the testing for their products, and producing new products, under the new EN standards. Global manufacturing practices mean that it is not cost-effective for gloves destined for Australia to be tested under the old requirements to meet the old AS/NZS.

How can I be sure that the compliance claims for my gloves are reliable?

- › Compliance claims are reliable if you deal with reliable manufacturers.
- › The standards provide test methods and, in some case performance requirements, for gloves. However, these test results are based on samples tested in a lab and are not always representative of the gloves produced in manufacturing.
- › If in doubt, always ask. Trusted, established manufacturers will be able to detail who certifies their products, and under what conditions. They should also be able to provide a track record of managing the testing and certification of products.

Key points:

- › Ask your manufacturer who tests their product, and when.
- › Remember that standards have changed in Europe – has your manufacturer tested their products under the new standard?
- › Remember that the Australian and New Zealand Standards based on the EN standards, are over 10 years old – and the EN standards changed in 2016.
- › Review your hand protection policies today – discuss your options with trusted manufacturers and suppliers.