

IOSH briefing on ISO 45001



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Why is more action needed on occupational health and safety?

More action is needed in order to tackle the huge human, societal and economic toll of health and safety failure across the globe. It is estimated that annually 2.78 million people are killed by work accidents and disease and there are around 374 million non-fatal work accidents worldwide. Around four per cent of world GDP is lost to work accidents and diseases [source: ILO].

Clearly, poor risk management is not an acceptable or sustainable model. Managing occupational health and safety risk not only prevents injury, illness and death, it also helps to support business success and sustain the economy.

Why is a new standard needed?

International standards are important because they help to build consensus and consistency and provide an internationally recognised benchmark.

In 1996 the British Standards Institute (BSI) created BS 8800, *Guide to occupational health and safety management*, and in 1999 worked with others to develop OHSAS 18001, which fulfilled the growing demand for a certifiable standard. This progressively gained a level of global acceptance – certifications number over 90,000 in 127 countries, with around 40 national versions. However, because its development was not based on international consensus and because there is no formal agreement between accreditation bodies and the OHSAS Project Group, the need for a truly internationally agreed certifiable standard remained.

In addition, ISO management system standards on quality, environment and food safety, for example, have led historically to some differences and confusion, with separate risk control systems. To help address this, ISO 9001 (QMS) and ISO 14001 (EMS) have recently been updated using the common framework (Annex SL) and so it makes sense that a new updated standard for OHSMS is available too.

In 2013 BSI proposed that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) produce an international standard based on BS OHSAS 18001. ISO approved a project committee (ISO PC 283) to develop a new standard. That new international and certifiable standard, *Occupational health and safety management systems – requirements and guidance for use*, known as ISO 45001, has now been published.

What are the potential benefits?

Applying ISO 45001 and effectively managing occupational health and safety risks can assist an organisation to:

- minimise occupational health and safety risk (including risk to mental and physical health) to all those working on its behalf
- improve its occupational health and safety performance continually
- integrate occupational health and safety into its business management system and processes

In addition to the humanitarian benefits of reduced injury, illness and death, good occupational health and safety management can help organisations to:

- ensure socially responsible and sustainable operations
- enhance productivity and customer loyalty
- improve reputation, reliability and business success
- attract clients and investment
- facilitate recruitment and retention of employees
- ensure legal compliance as a minimum
- reduce losses due to incidents and absence
- reduce downtime and disruption to operations
- reduce the cost of insurance premiums

What are ISO 45001's main characteristics?

- It uses the 'Plan-Do-Check-Act' model, is risk-based and takes a similar approach to OHSAS 18001 and HSG65
- It gives the intended outcome of the system as: "...to prevent death, work-related injury and ill health to workers, to improve and provide a safe and healthy workplace for [an organisation's] workers and other persons under its control."
- In common with all new management system standards, ISO 45001 uses the same 'high-level structure' to help enable integration (common clauses, terms and definitions and core text, which is supplemented with discipline-specific additions), also known as 'Annex SL'

Outline of clauses in the draft standard

- 1 **Scope** – the applicability of this international standard
- 2 **Normative references** – there are no normative references in this standard
- 3 **Terms and definitions** – outlines those that apply to this standard
- 4 **Context of the organisation** – eg understanding needs and expectations of interested parties
- 5 **Leadership and worker participation** – eg commitment, policy, roles and responsibilities, accountabilities, authorities and consultation
- 6 **Planning** – eg setting occupational health and safety objectives and the actions needed to achieve them
- 7 **Support** – eg resources, competence, awareness, communication, documented information
- 8 **Operation** – eg operational planning and action, including change management, outsourcing, procurement and contractors, emergency preparedness
- 9 **Performance evaluation** – eg measuring and monitoring, internal audit and management review
- 10 **Improvement** – eg setting targets, investigating incidents and non-conformities, taking corrective actions

There is an accompanying Annex A (informative) guidance on the use of this international standard, which explains the various clauses.

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How does ISO 45001 differ from OHSAS 18001?

Main differences:

- **context of organisation** – there must be consideration of wider issues such as supply chain and the local community; and cultural, social, political, legal, technological, economic and governance settings
- **leadership** – top management (those who direct or control organisations) need to take an active role, eg set direction, foster trust, promote positive culture and communicate what needs to be done and why it is important
- **documented information** – this includes electronic and processed information (eg use of smartphones or tablets) and does not refer to ‘documentation’, ‘records’ or ‘documented procedures’

Also, more focus on:

- **worker participation** – top management ensuring more non-managerial participation and supporting leadership and contribution from others
- **continual improvement** – there is a requirement for continual improvement objectives and process, such as to improve system efficacy and promote positive culture
- **hierarchy of control** – there is emphasis on applying the ‘hierarchy’ at planning and operational stages, so that problems can be designed-out at the earliest stage
- **risk management** – this requires ongoing assessment of risks and opportunities, for both occupational health and safety and the occupational safety and health management system itself
- **compliance status** – requires a process to ensure that relevant legal and other requirements are taken into account, kept up-to-date and checked for compliance status
- **contractors, procurement and outsourcing** – recognising the growth in these areas, there is a requirement for specific processes to manage these issues safely
- **performance evaluation** – requires criteria for evaluation not only of occupational health and safety performance but also of the efficacy of the system

What’s happening next?

Following a four-year development period, ISO 45001 was published on 12 March 2018 and OHSAS 18001 will now be withdrawn. For organisations already certificated to OHSAS 18001, there will be a three-year migration period to move to ISO 45001. National Standards Bodies, such as the UK’s BSI, have produced implementation guidance documents.

In the UK, the guidance document is BS 45002, published at the same time as ISO 45001. BSI will also publish a series of shorter topic-specific guides on various elements, such as occupational health, risk and investigation, throughout 2018. Other bodies, such as CQI, IRCA and TUC are providing their own guides.

IOSH continues to provide free materials and relevant training courses to support improvement – for more information email iso45001@iosh.com.

What implications are there?

The differences between OHSAS 18001 and ISO 45001 could mean there are implications for organisations seeking certification and for their advisers; and also for auditors who are auditing to the new standard. Key areas include the requirement for demonstration of leadership and adequate consideration of an organisation’s context.

For example, OSH practitioners may need to develop or refine their skills in helping managers to assess the internal and external factors affecting context (eg horizon-scanning and ‘STEEPLE’ analysis) and ensure effective engagement with relevant stakeholders and interested parties. They will also need to be able to prepare CEOs and other senior managers to be audited to this new standard. The introduction of ISO 45001 provides the opportunity for closer working relations between OSH practitioners and Boards, CEOs and other relevant corporate functions such as procurement, encouraging organisations to show more visible and socially responsible leadership.

Auditors who are auditing to ISO 45001 may need new skills, both interpersonal, in interviewing top management, and technical, in dealing with an increased variety of information sources and researching organisational context.

What should organisations be doing?

Organisations seeking to improve their occupational health and safety management arrangements should review them against the requirements of ISO 45001. Those with OHSAS 18001 certification will have certification body auditors to advise on them on this. Such reviews involve a ‘gap analysis’ audit to identify any changes to existing processes that might be necessary.

Organisations without certification to an occupational safety and health management system standard, but considering seeking ISO 45001 certification, can purchase the standard and associated guidance and start preparatory work. They will need to engage a certification body to audit them and conduct the ‘gap analysis’. This will identify specifically where and how their processes need to be improved to achieve the standard. To find a suitable certification body, organisations should consult their national accreditation body and, to identify these, see the International Accreditation Forum.

Of course, organisations can also opt to adopt the standard and follow the guidance without seeking certification if they choose. This will require an adequate internal audit process to check conformity against the requirements of the standard.

So, in summary, organisations should ensure effective occupational health and safety risk management is integral to their operations and that they have strong leadership, worker involvement, a competent workforce and a positive occupational health and safety culture. As well as reducing injury, illness and death, this can help enhance the organisation’s reputation, resilience and results and ensure a sustainable and socially responsible future.

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Where can I get more information?

- The ISO 45001 web pages at www.iso.org/iso/iso45001
- The BSI web pages at www.bsigroup.com/OHSAS18001Revision
- IOSH webinar on ISO 45001 <https://iosh.adobeconnect.com/p2lmyck1quc/>
- IRCA Briefing note – Annex SL www.irca.org/Documents/press/2012/IRCA%20Annex%20SL%20brochure.pdf

Note: ISO PC 283 has 70 participating countries, 16 observing countries and 20 Liaison members (including IOSH, ILO, IOE, ITUC and OHSAS Project Group). As a Category A Liaison body, IOSH has been pleased to provide four submissions and experts for two Task Groups, as well as hosting a full ISO PC 283 meeting in Trinidad. For more information please read the IOSH liaison report, *Liaison Report to PC 283* at www.iosh.co.uk/~media/Documents/ISO_45001/IOSH_Liaison_report_to_PC_293_meeting_in_Geneva_Sept15.

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IOSH is the Chartered body for health and safety professionals. With over 47,000 members in more than 130 countries, we're the world's largest professional health and safety organisation.

We set standards, and support, develop and connect our members with resources, guidance, events and training. We're the voice of the profession, and campaign on issues that affect millions of working people.

IOSH was founded in 1945 and is a registered charity with international NGO status.

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