ISO 45001 and IOSH: an introduction

What is ISO 45001?

ISO 45001 is the new international standard that gives organisations a framework to improve employee safety, reduce workplace risks and create better, safer working conditions.

It was published in March 2018, replacing BS OHSAS 18001, the internationally-applied British Standard for occupational safety and health management systems. It is risk-based and uses the familiar 'plan-do-check-act' approach, together with the high-level structure common to all new management system standards.

Our profession and an increasing number of organisations understand that good safety and health is more than a benefit to workers – it is a core business value and a cornerstone of a civilised society. An international standard for effective risk management will tackle the global toll of safety and health failures, protecting working people worldwide and reducing the cost to the global economy. At the same time, it will help organisations to improve their reputation, resilience and results.

IOSH is a strong advocate of a systematic approach to managing safety and health and is very supportive of the new standard. We believe global safety and health requires leadership, resources and strategic attention and that applying the principles of ISO 45001 can be a really practical way of ensuring this.

What has IOSH's role been in this process?

As the Chartered body for safety and health professionals, with over 47,000 members in more than 130 countries, IOSH has special status as a 'liaison member' of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and was closely involved in the development of the new standard.

The Institution had two members on the Work Group, working with international colleagues and helping to process the many comments sent in from right across the world. We also involved our members actively in consultations on two early drafts of the standard, gathering their ideas and submitting their suggestions for improvements.

What will IOSH be doing to support members and training providers?

During the four years of development, IOSH provided articles, blogs and briefings for members to keep them updated, together with a webinar from the Chair of the ISO 45001 committee. We also delivered presentations and Q&A sessions at IOSH branch meetings and industry conferences.

We are continuing to provide freely-downloadable PowerPoint presentations (together with speaker notes), explaining the background to ISO 45001, what it contains, how it differs from OHSAS 18001 and the way forward. IOSH members can present this at branch and group events, as well as in their own organisations.

We will be arranging more webinars throughout 2018, covering some of the areas of stronger focus, such as the new emphasis on 'leadership' and on 'context' of the organisation. We will be discussing what this new standard means to businesses, 'top management', safety and health professionals and auditors.

Our extensive network of training providers will be kept up to date on developments and how these inform our training products and services.

And in the three-year migration period following publication of the standard, we will be gathering case studies and helpful tips on implementation from our members and sharing them more widely with others.

We have already created a page on the IOSH website as a 'resource hub' for members at **www.iosh.co.uk/45001**. Here you will find links to the materials we have produced so far and access to new ones as they are added.

This is a fantastic opportunity for IOSH and our members to help organisations to reach their full potential and create businesses that are safe, healthy, successful and sustainable.