ISO 45001: your questions answered

What is an 'ISO standard'?
ISO standards are international standards developed to cover topics that have global application and address a recognised need. They are developed using a tried and tested consensus-building process involving National Standards Bodies and expert groups from around the world.

All new and revised management system standards now adopt the same high-level structure (Annex SL) and use common core text and terms and definitions. The ISO standards on quality and environment have large international take-ups, estimated at over one million for ISO 9001 on quality and about 350,000 for ISO 14001 on environment.

What is ISO 45001?
ISO 45001 is the new international standard on occupational health and safety management systems (OHSMSs). *Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Requirements* with guidance for use contains 10 clauses and an informative annex, together with a bibliography and index of terms.

It's the first-ever international standard for health and safety management. It forms part of the ISO series, eg ISO 9001 (Quality), ISO 14001 (Environment) and ISO 27001 (Information Security). It has now replaced OHSAS 18001 (Occupational health and safety management systems – Requirements).

Why is ISO 45001 needed?
ISO 45001 is needed to help ensure occupational safety and health receives the strategic attention and resources required to tackle the global toll of health and safety failures, with 2.78 million people dying each year as a result of work-related accidents or disease – one death every 12 seconds. As well as the enormous and unacceptable human cost of failure, it's also estimated to cost the global economy around four per cent of GDP.

A truly international standard is required for OHSMSs. Although OHSAS 18001 was widely used, with around 150,000 certifications in more than 120 countries, it was not consensus-based, and was not aligned to other ISO standards.

What is the relationship between ISO 45001 and national standards on OSH management?
OHSAS 18001 formed the basis of ISO 45001 and is the foundation for national standards in around 40 countries. Other national standards and guides on managing OHS have all been used to help inform its development, including: ILO-OSH 2001 (used worldwide), Z10 (used in the USA), CSA Z1000 (used in Canada), AS/NZS 4801 (used in Australia and New Zealand) and HSG65 (used in the UK).

How will ISO 45001 help organisations to put an OHSMS in place?
ISO 45001 provides an internationally-agreed framework for managing occupational health and safety risk in a proportionate way, regardless of an organisation's size, sector or country of operation. It helps organisations to develop and implement the right policies and processes – taking a systematic plan-do-check-act and risk-based approach.

How does ISO 45001 generally compare to OHSAS 18001?
Users of OHSAS 18001 will find much in ISO 45001 that they're familiar with – it has many common features, including risk-based thinking and the plan-do-check-act model. A good management system certified under OHSAS 18001 should have covered much essential ground towards becoming a good management system under ISO 45001 too.

The main difference will be the approach. Top management must be more actively involved and ensure effective worker participation and promote a positive culture. They'll also need to give greater consideration to the context of the organisation and stakeholder expectations. Some may decide to take advantage of the opportunity to rationalise and use other forms of documented information, reducing their paper-based systems.

What are the potential benefits of adopting ISO 45001?
Applying ISO 45001 and effectively managing occupational safety and health risks can assist an organisation to:
- minimise occupational safety and health risk to all those working on its behalf (including to their mental and physical health)
- improve its occupational health and safety performance continually
- integrate occupational health and safety into its business management system and processes

In addition to reduced injury, illness and death, good occupational safety and health management can help organisations to enhance productivity, reputation, reliability and business success.

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What are the first steps an organisation should take towards ISO 45001?

- Secure 'top management' commitment to ISO 45001 and their involvement in actively leading on it
- Review your current OSH arrangements against the ISO 45001 requirements to identify any gaps
- Develop an implementation and resources plan to close the identified gaps
- Ensure effective mechanisms for change management and worker consultation and participation
- Take steps to address any OSH competence and resource needs across the organisation

Take a look at our five top tips at www.iosh.co.uk/45001toptips for more information

How do you find an accreditation body for ISO 45001?

UKAS is the UK-accreditation body for those providing certification services to UK organisations.

The ISO website advises "…when choosing a certification body, you should:
- Evaluate several certification bodies.
- Check if the certification body uses the relevant CASCO standard
- Check if it is accredited. Accreditation is not compulsory, and non-accreditation does not necessarily mean it is not reputable, but it does provide independent confirmation of competence. To find an accredited certification body, contact the national accreditation body in your country or visit the *International Accreditation Forum*."

The value of any service relies on the competence, quality and integrity of the providers.

Can ISO 45001 be used by organisations that don't want to go for certification?

Yes, ISO 45001 is a voluntary standard and is designed to be used by organisations of any size, sector or location, whether or not they intend to seek certification, to help improve their health and safety management. The principles can be applied and an organisation can check its conformity with the requirements using internal auditors. The standard describes the following ways in which an organisation can check its conformity:
- "making a self-determination and self-declaration, or
- seeking confirmation of its conformity by parties having an interest in the organization, such as customers, or
- seeking confirmation of its self-declaration by a party external to the organization, or
- seeking certification/registration of its occupational health and safety management system by an external organization."

But it also makes clear that claims of conformity aren't acceptable "…unless all its requirements are incorporated into an organisation's occupational safety and health management system and fulfilled without exclusion."

What's IOSH's role been in developing ISO 45001 and what will it be in future?

IOSH was granted Category A Liaison status with the committee developing ISO 45001 (ISO PC 283) after successfully securing a majority of ISO member votes from countries across the world, recognising our credentials as an independent, global organisation with a valuable contribution to make.

We've been an active participant and attended all the international meetings since April 2014, responded to all the public consultations, provided experts for two of the PC 283 Work Group's 'task groups', and hosted a full meeting of PC 283 in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as a UK road show.

For the future – IOSH will continue its role on BSI's HS/1 Committee and support the formation and operation of an ISO Technical Committee to review and maintain ISO 45001 and any related standards.

What is IOSH doing to support members and training providers on ISO 45001?

To support our members and training providers, IOSH has developed an 'ISO 45001 resource hub' exclusively for IOSH members. We've also ensured that our portfolio of awareness courses (*Working Safely, Managing Safely and Leading Safely*) are all consistent with ISO 45001 and will help organisations to embed OSH competence throughout their operations. We're also developing further courses to support CPD, such as on migrating from OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001 and auditor / lead auditor training. For more information, email us at iso45001@iosh.com.

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