



New international standard for occupational health and safety management, ISO 45001, launched

The first global standard for occupational health and safety management, ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety management – requirements with guidance for use has published.

ISO 45001 was created to address the global need to improve work related health and safety of workers – over two million of whom die each year from work-related incidents and an even higher number from occupational health issues. Led by the UK, the new international standard was developed with input from over 70 countries across five continents.

ISO 45001 specifies requirements for creating an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system, with interpretation guidance to enable an organization to improve OH&S performance in the workplace. The requirements in the standard are applicable to all organizations, irrespective of its size, activities.

Rather than see OH&S as a necessary burden, ISO 45001 encourages an organization to see OH&S as an investment in their success. The standard uses risk-based thinking throughout to minimize negative outcomes, and emphasizes that workers closest to a particular risk should be involved in the decision-making process. By managing risks and embracing the opportunity to improve OH&S performance, organizations create the environment for a healthier, safer and more engaged workforce.

The standard is applicable for all workers irrespective of their occupation and makes no distinction between whether they do paid or unpaid work. It was developed on the premise that the health and safety at work of a volunteer at a local community centre is as worthy as a full-time employee on a long-term contract.

ISO 45001 has a strong emphasis on leadership and requires senior management to actively demonstrate commitment to OH&S. There is also a focus on the participation and consultation of workers in making sure that the OH&S management system covers what needs to be covered and is communicated effectively to everyone involved.

One of the goals during the development of this standard was to encourage a culture of openness around OH&S: health and safety should not solely be the remit of health and safety managers, but the responsibility of all workers. When everyone feels that they can report OH&S hazards freely and without retribution, the working environment is typically safer and healthier for everyone.

Marc Barnes, Australia and New Zealand Managing Director at BSI, said: "ISO 45001 is about protecting workers at all levels of an organization. From the Saturday part-timer on a zero-hours contract to the chief executive of an international conglomerate, this global standard was designed for the good of the organization and everyone who works for it.

"Occupational health and safety management doesn't have to mean more paperwork and more red tape – on the contrary, ISO 45001 was created to make it easier for organizations to create and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all. OH&S impacts every organization, irrespective of how big it is, the sector or where in the world it is located. As such, ISO 45001 is relevant to an organization with ten workers or a hundred thousand."

In order to assist with the implementation of ISO 45001, BS 45002 Occupational health and safety management systems: general guidelines for the application of ISO 45001 also launches today. This British Standard describes the intent of individual clauses in ISO 45001 and provides guidance to help organizations implement an OH&S management system based on ISO 45001.

ISO 45001 replaces the British Standard OHSAS 18001; existing users of OHSAS 18001 have three years to transition to the new international standard. ISO 45001 aligns with other key international standards such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 for quality management and environmental management respectively.

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