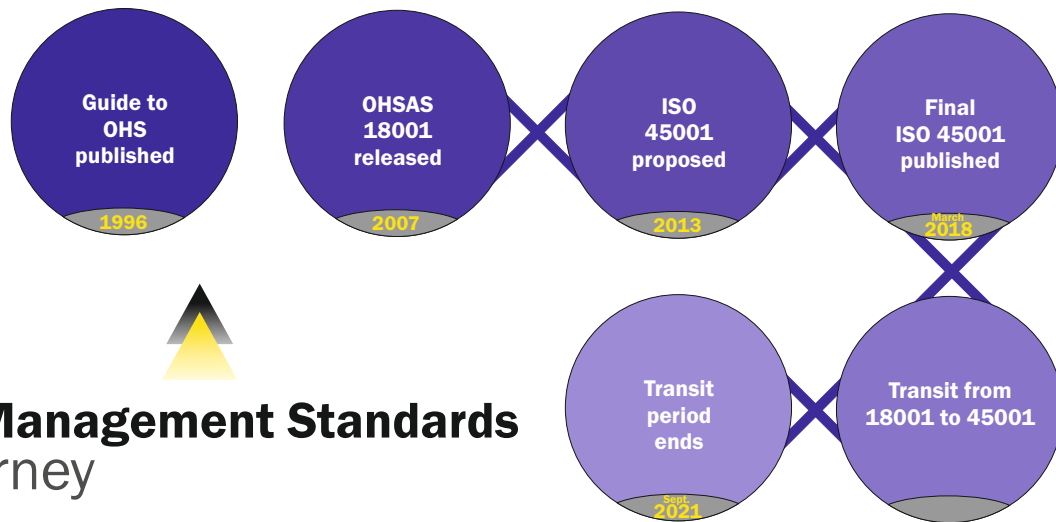




The New Occupational Health & Safety Management System

ISO
45001:2018

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OHS Management Standards A journey

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ISO or the International Organization for Standardization is an organisation that helps to establish various international standards and corresponding certifications which are globally accepted. It is an independent, non-governmental organization, the members of which are the organizations dealing with the standards of the 165 countries[1]. It is the world's major creator of voluntary international standards facilitating world trade through common standards among nations. ISO Standards ensure that products, services, procedures are safe, reliable and of good quality. Application of ISO standards reduces costs by minimizing waste and errors and increasing productivity.

The first systemic efforts that were made at international level to standardise Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management began in early nineties and the guide to OHS was out in 1996 and OHSAS (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series) 18001 released in 2007 was the first international standard for occupational health and safety management systems which was later adopted as a British Standard. The rise and journey of OHS standardization process is depicted in the form of an illustration given above.

ISO 45001:2018 is an International Standard Occupational Health and Safety Management System based on the OHSAS 18001, conventions and guidelines of the International Labour Organization including ILO OSH 2001, and other national standards that specify the requirements of an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management system. This standard intends to improve organization's OHS performance proactively. Since it follows the High-Level Structure of other ISO standards, an organization can easily integrate all these standards just by adopting ISO 45001 certification. The ISO 45001:2018 standard came into being on 12th March 2018 after the acceptance of the second draft in 2017 (the first draft of 2016 was rejected)[2]. ISO 45001 is now a recognized international standard for Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Management Systems and it has entirely replaced the BS OHSAS 18001 post September 2021. The replacement deadline was initially for exact three years, i.e., March 2021, but it was extended by six months due to Covid-19 pandemic. Certification to ISO 45001 is not an aim of the standard but can be a useful tool to demonstrate the compliance with the objectives of the certificate.

Structure

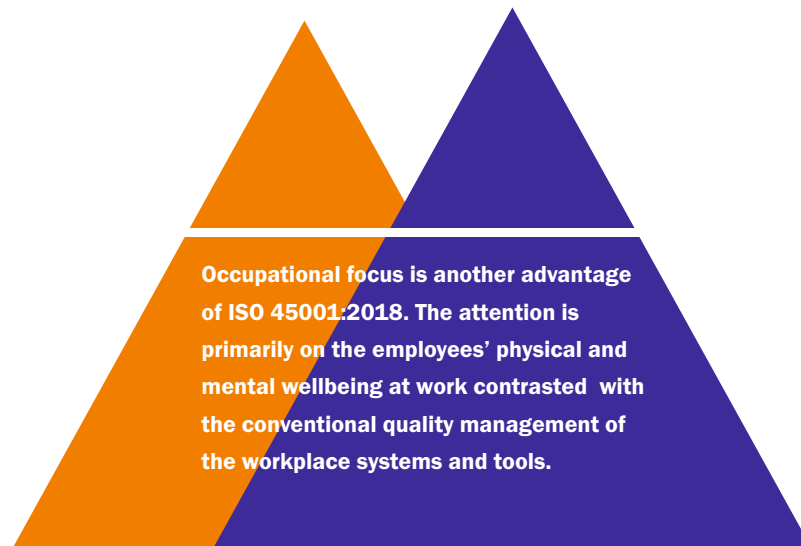
ISO 45001 uses the Annex SL process and structure, easing the use and integration of multiple ISO management system standards for employment by a single organization. It entails an increased focus on the context of the organization and a stronger role of its top management and leadership. The structure has 10 clauses, namely:

- Scope
- Normative references
- Terms and definitions
- Context of the organization
- Leadership
- Planning
- Support
- Operation
- Performance evaluation
- Improvement

ISO 45001 has adopted the four stage Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle for achieving constant improvement. It adopts a systematic approach to determine workable solutions, assessing the results, and implementing those solutions that have been shown to work.

Applicability, Scope and Objectives

ISO 45001:2018 is most suitable for any organization that wants to establish, implement and maintain an OHS management system to improve occupational health and safety, eradicate hazards and minimize OHS risks (including system deficiencies), take advantage of OHS opportunities, and tackle OHS management system nonconformities associated with its activities. This standard is applicable to all types of organizations regardless of their size, nature, location, type and activities and may include medical facilities, manufacturing industries, service organizations or other industries and workplaces. It is designed to be integrated into an organization's existing management processes and follows the same high-level structure as other ISO management system standards, such as ISO 9001 (quality management)



and ISO 14001 (environmental management).

ISO 45001:2018 intends to enable organizations in providing safe and healthy workplaces by preventing work-related injury and ill health, besides proactively improving its OHS performance. The objectives of ISO 45001:2018 include

- * Continual improvement of OHS performance
- * Fulfilment of legal and other requirements
- * Achievement of OHS goals

ISO 45001:2018 applies to the OHS risks under the organization's control, taking into account factors such as the context in which the organization operates and the needs and expectations of its workers and other interested parties. It enables an organization, through its OHS management system, to integrate other aspects of health and safety, such as worker wellness or wellbeing. However, it does not state specific criteria for OHS performance, nor does it prescribe any design of OHS management system. It also does not address issues such as product safety, property damage or environmental impacts, beyond the risks to workers and other relevant interested parties.

ISO 45001:2018 can be used wholly or partly but one cannot claim compliance with this certification unless all its requirements are incorporated into the organization's OHS management system and implemented without any exception.

Advantages

ISO 45001 enables organizations to put in place an occupational health and safety (OHS) management system. This will help them manage their OHS risks and improve their OHS performance by developing and implementing effective policies and objectives.

The salient potential benefits from the use of this standard include:

i. It enhances safety due to reduction in unsafe conditions and workplace incidents. Another feature responsible for enhanced safety is preventative risk and hazard assessment. Implementing ISO 45001 helps the organization prevent risks. The internal auditing system provides helps in spotting potential threats to health and safety.

ii. It increases Return-on-Investment (RoI). By implementing ISO 45001, the efficiency of staff improves, whilst workplace injuries reduce, implying productivity levels can be improved significantly across the board. This improvement in productivity and general employee safety can have a positive impact on the expenditures like insurance premiums for the organization by reducing the work-related insurance claims thus lowering the cost of insurance for the business.

iii. Occupational focus is another advantage of this ISO. The attention is primarily on the employees' physical and mental wellbeing at work contrasted with the conventional quality management of the workplace systems and tools.

iv. ISO 45001 implementation also results in improved morale of the employees. It perks up individual safety as well as organizational since it addresses the personal health and safety risks to the individual due to any process or use of machinery within the organization. This includes both mental health and physical safety within the workplace.

v. This ISO deals with both the risk and opportunities whereas previous standards primarily dealt with the risks presented by the organizational process and characteristics.

vi. ISO 45001 leads to increased productivity as a result of reduced absenteeism and staff turnover. The standard is built around the best OHS practices. Having a strong, consistent standard means that the organization is more efficient all around. It improves staff morale, which has a significant impact on staff turnover and retention rates. The consistency achieved due to the standard translates into efficiency.

vii. Implementing ISO 45001 results in reduced insurance costs due to lower insurance premiums as it proves the organization is sincerely managing and protecting their employees.

viii. As the ISO requires top-down approach, it involves participation by all the employees of the organization. This translates into better health and safety culture due to active role by employees in their own OHS.

ix. This particular ISO ensures responsibility and ownership lies with top level management. It reinforces leadership commitment to OH&S performance due to enhanced and proactive participation by management towards OHS. With the involvement of top leadership and a clearly communicated process for



identifying hazards, there is continuous improvement in the occupational health and safety over time.

- x. The implementation of this certification also results into improved compliance to meet legal and regulatory requirements.
- xi. It leads to enhanced reputation of the organization. By implementing the latest and the most upgraded occupational health and safety standard, the organization is considered in the leading category among the similar organizations and internationally recognized. This level of excellence is acknowledged worldwide and gives an edge to the organization over its competitors.

It also increases mutual trust between employees and the organization and between organization and the outer world. By demonstrating continuous improvement of employees' morale, safety and performance, people trust and hold the organization socially accountable for the staff's well-being. By being transparent and promoting corporate social responsibility, the opinion and trust of the public, future employees and prospective clients improves considerably.

Difference between OHSAS 18001 and ISO 45001

An organisation already accredited to OHSAS 18001, had time to transit to the ISO 45001 and the benefits that come with it until 30th September 2021 with little efforts due to the availability of some of the necessary tools and systems in place to implement ISO 45001. Since both the accreditations are concerned with the occupational health and safety, people often confuse ISO 45001 and OHSAS 18001 to be same although there are significant differences between these two accreditations. It is important to understand these differences along with the significance that one has with the other.

1. **Annex SL:** Annex SL is a new management system format that helps streamline creation of new standards, and eases the implementation of multiple standards within an organization easier. The Annex SL is a section of the ISO/IEC directives part 1 that prescribes documentation of ISO Management System Standards (MSS).

ISO 45001:2018, like most other ISO standards, has adopted the Annex SL High Level Structure (HLS) which is the core of any modern ISO standard accreditation. Annex SL is designed to simplify integration with other management

systems like ISO 9001 and 14001 with consistent language and matching sub-clauses, making it easier for an organisation to build and manage an integrated management system.

2. **Inclusion of Top Management:** Clause 5 of ISO 45001 strongly emphasises and encourages the incorporation of health and safety into the broader management system of the organisation. This aspect ensures enhanced role of the top management who are now expected to take a stronger top-down leadership role. Under ISO 45001 the role of the management representative is permitted but strongly discouraged unlike OHSAS 18001, where the operation of the occupational health and safety management system could be delegated by senior management to a representative. There are 3 main reasons for this:

(i) ISO 45001 places a strong emphasis on risk like all modern ISO standards. If health and safety responsibility is delegated to a single person or a very few then it is a risky proposition indeed, especially in the context of larger organisations.

(ii) In contrast, If the above responsibility is distributed among many employees and at many levels then it will certainly lead to improvement over a period of time.

(iii) The involvement of top management will imply that they cannot afford to escape from the obligations of the process of the health and safety management system by simply appointing and delegating OHS responsibilities to a representative.

3. **Top Down Operations:** This is a direct outcome of point 2 which translates into the operations of health and safety management system as described in the following points:

(i) Frequent reviews of the health and safety system performance by the management;

(ii) Management actively collecting feedback from employees for improvement and corrective/preventive action;

(iii) Management Initiating and participating in safety audits;

(iv) Management encouraging and rewarding hazard identification and constructive ideas;

(v) Availability, both timely and sufficiently of resources, like quality management tools, safety and protective gears.



4. All-inclusive Health and Safety Culture and Greater Participation by Staff: ISO 45001, by removal of the management representative position and greater top-down focus, encourages health and safety responsibility and engagement as much as possible so that most of the employees can support and contribute to a culture of health and safety. Not only all the employees are trained on health and safety procedures and required to abide by them, but are aware of the objectives and advantages of a safe, healthy and efficient workplace and authorized to contribute to it.

A firm integration of health and safety culture into the organisation is reflected in many ways and should begin with its inclusion in the recruitment itself, followed by policies which make sure that the employees have enhanced participation and consultation and policies are devised around their feedback. Also, the employees are encouraged to flag the risks and opportunities during their routine jobs. Management is also obliged to openly share accident investigation and enquiry results, as well as planned changes and developments.

5. Managing Risks and Hazards: Whereas OHSAS 18001 is just aimed on controlling hazards, ISO 45001 encourages 'risk-based thinking' to identify and treat risks. In tune with the recent ISO standards, ISO 45001 has adopted a more proactive, flexible and preventative approach based on dealing with a broader range of risks before they precipitate.

ISO 45001 also lays greater emphasis on opportunities by encouraging organisations to scope, evaluate and utilize these opportunities for continuous improvement instead of simply reacting to non-conformances. It also includes an expanded section on preparing for and responding to emergency situations, thus providing a more holistic perception of health and safety risk.

6. Wide-ranging Planning: ISO 45001 has greater stress than OHSAS 18001 with respect to enacting organisational goals, connecting them to health and safety objectives, fixing priorities and generating documentation for the same. With stronger emphasis on planning and setting objectives in tune with the resource availability, staff accountability, and timelines etc.

7. Mental health, stress and fatigue: Mental health is now widely recognised as part of total health in occupational health

background. Though it is not singularly stated in ISO 45001, there are several areas of ISO 45001 where mental health is mentioned and regarded as an important component of health e.g., Clause 4.2 (the needs of workers and interested parties include mental wellbeing), Clause 6.1.2.1 (employee stress and fatigue as part of hazard/risk identification); Clause 6.2 (integration of mental health in health and safety improvement objectives and plans); Clause 8.1.2 (treating mental health risks and lowering the score of their residual risk).

8. Terminology: Except three terms, none of the total 37 definitions and terms used in the ISO 45001 are identical with those in OHSAS 18001. For example, it now defines 'worker' and 'workplace', and replaces the term 'documents and records' with 'documented information' indicating broader scope of the standard.

Conclusions

The issue Health and safety at workplace is one of the most important concern for any organization. ISO 45001, as a global standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems provides a practical solution to improve the safety and occupational health of both employees and other personnel. This standard has been designed with an intention to be applicable for any workplace regardless of its size, type and nature. There are numerous benefits for implementing ISO 45001. It is an excellent management system that aims to reduce health and safety risks within the workplace and places the protection of employees' health at the forefront of all processes and planning.

Acknowledgement

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