AS/NZS 4801:2001

Australian/New Zealand Standard™



Occupational health and safety management systems—

Specification with guidance for use



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The following interests are represented on Committee SF-001:

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Australian/New Zealand Standard™

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Originated in Australia as AS 4801—2000.
Originated in New Zealand as NZS 4801(Int):1999.
AS 4801—2000 and NZS 4801(Int):1999 jointly revised and designated AS/NZS 4801:2001.

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Preface

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee SF-001, Occupational Health and Safety Management to supersede both AS 4801:2000, *Occupational health and safety management systems—Specification with guidance for use* and NZS 4801(Int):1999, *Occupational health and safety management systems—Specification with guidance for use*.

The objective of this Standard is to set auditable criteria for an occupational health and safety management system. The Standard is a specification that aims to encompass the best elements of such systems already widely used in Australia and New Zealand. It includes guidance on how those criteria may be achieved. The Standard should not be relied upon to ensure compliance with all legal and other obligations.

The objective of this revision is to amalgamate AS 4801 and NZS 4801 as a Joint Standard.

As an amalgamation of current Australian and New Zealand Standards, elements of this Standard differ from both AS 4801:2000 and NZS 4801(Int):1999. Most notably the terms '*hazard*/*risk assessment*' and '*control of hazards*/*risks*' are used to accommodate the different terminology used in each country to describe similar elements of the systematic management of occupational health and safety.

Consequently, '*hazard*/*risk assessment*' refers to the processes of '*hazard assessment*' in New Zealand and '*risk assessment*' in Australia.

Similarly, '*control of hazards*/*risks*' refers to the processes of '*control of hazards*' in New Zealand and '*control of risks*' in Australia.

Other differences between this Standard and NZS 4801(Int):1999 were brought about in order that, except as outlined in this Preface, this Standard maintains identical wording with AS 4801.

This Standard is now a Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand document, and so, elements of this Standard differ from AS 4801:2000 and NZS 4801(Int):1999 to show this joint nature.

Other changes have been made in Appendices B and C to update references to AS/NZS ISO 9000 and AS/NZS ISO 9001.

Compliance with this Standard may not necessarily meet your OHS legal obligations

The term 'informative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which is applies. An 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

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Foreword

The adoption and implementation of a range of effective occupational health and safety (OHS) management actions in a systematic manner can contribute to optimal outcomes for all interested parties. Organizations of all kinds and sizes adopt a systematic approach to managing OHS and develop OHS management systems (OHSMS) within the context of:

- The general growth of concern from all interested parties about OHS matters.
- Changes to legislation.
- Other measures to foster sustained OHS improvement.

There are many reasons why organizations implement an OHSMS including legal imperatives, ethical concerns, industrial relations considerations and to improve financial performance. Implementation of an effective OHSMS should, however, primarily lead to a reduction of workplace illness and injury, minimizing the costs associated with workplace accidents. OHSMS are also used by some organizations to demonstrate, internally and in some cases externally (via self-declaration or certification/registration as appropriate), that they are systematically controlling the risks to all persons affected by the organization's activities, products or services.

For organizations wishing to implement, develop, improve, or in some cases audit an OHSMS, a pair of linked and complementary Standards is available to provide guidance. AS/NZS 4804:2001, *Occupational health and safety management systems—General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques* is the primary Standard relevant to all organizations and provides general guidance on how to implement, develop and/or improve an OHSMS. This Standard, AS/NZS 4801, *Occupational health and safety management systems—Specification with guidance for use,* establishes an audit framework principally for use by third party bodies that have been asked by an organization to conduct an independent audit of the organization's OHSMS. The framework can also be used as a reference point for internal auditing procedures. It is envisaged that not all users of the primary Standard, AS/NZS 4804, will need to use AS/NZS 4801 as illustrated below.



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AS/NZS 4804 provides general guidance on:

- How to set up an OHSMS.
- How to continually improve an OHSMS.
- The resources required to set up and continually improve an OHSMS.

The AS/NZS 4804 guidelines describe a systematic management approach that can assist in both meeting legal requirements and lead to sustained improvement in OHS performance. These guidelines can assist organizations establish their own OHSMS and they also apply to any existing OHSMS. The guidelines do not prescribe the type or format or style of OHSMS that should be used. Rather, AS/NZS 4804 contains guidance for organizations of any size or type seeking to develop and implement an OHSMS, or improve an existing system, so that it will—

- be appropriate for that organization;
- be integrated with other systems and core functions of the organization;
- improve the organization's overall performance; and
- assist the organization to meet its legal responsibilities.

Injury management is an important element of any system but has been referred to only peripherally in AS/NZS 4804. The reader is referred elsewhere, to their respective jurisdictional authorities for guidance e.g. in Australia, to National Occupational Health and Safety Commission's *Guidance note for the best practice rehabilitation management of Occupational injuries and disease*, NOHSC:3021 (1995); similarly, in New Zealand, *Active and Working! Managing acute low back pain in the workplace: A guide for employers* published by the National Advisory Committee on Health and Disability, and the Accident Compensation Corporation, April 2000.

AS/NZS 4801 is a specification Standard that establishes a framework primarily for enabling independent external audits and reviews of an organization's OHSMS, but it can also be used as a framework for internal audits. Many organizations already undertake internal audits or reviews to assess the effectiveness of their OHSMS. Some organizations may also seek independent third party assurances that an organization they are proposing to do business with has effective systems in place to control their OHS. To be effective, and to contribute to ongoing improvements in OHS performance, independent audits need to be conducted by competent persons within a structured management system and integrated with overall management activity. AS/NZS 4801 specifies the framework against which external auditors will assess an OHSMS. However, these audits and reviews would not be sufficient to provide an organization with the assurance that its performance not only meets, but will continue to meet, its ethical, legal and policy requirements.

These linked Standards have been written to be applicable to all types and sizes of organizations and to be generic enough to accommodate diverse geographical, cultural and social conditions, as well as the multiplicity of OHS legal jurisdictions. Thus two organizations carrying out similar activities but having different OHSMS and performances may both conform to the requirements established in AS/NZS 4801.

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However, any effective OHSMS needs to reflect OHS issues in the organization in which it is used. The basis of the approach is shown in Figure 1.

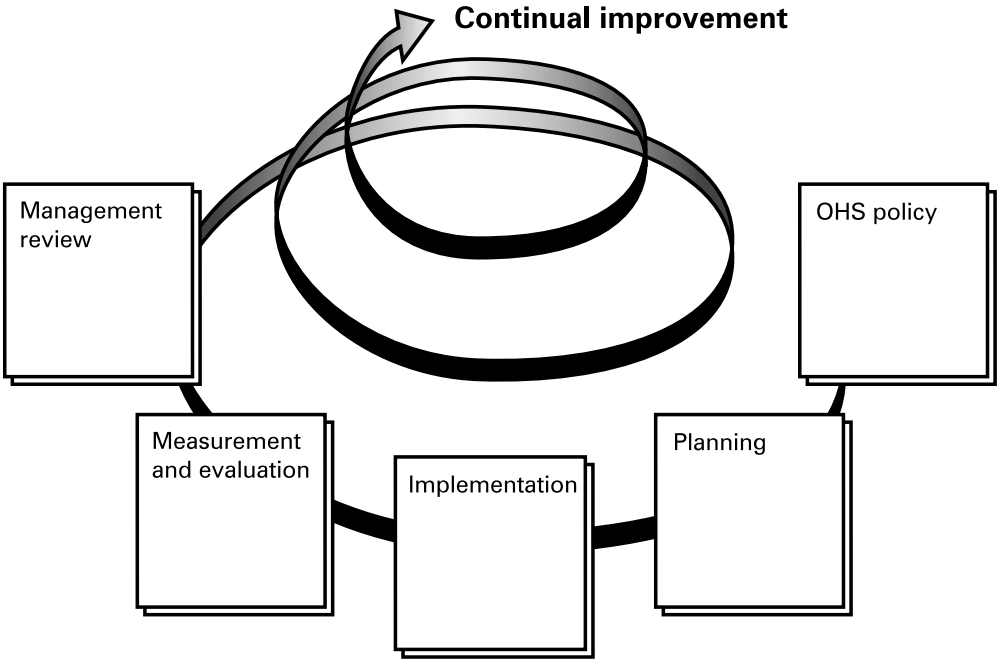


Figure 1 OHS Management System Model

The success of an OHSMS depends on commitment from all levels and functions within an organization, especially from senior management. An effective OHSMS can assist an organization to—

- set out OHS policy and objectives;
- establish, assess and review the effectiveness of procedures which give effect to OHS policy and objectives;
- achieve conformance with OHS policy and objectives of the organization; and
- demonstrate such conformance to others (via self-declaration or certification/ registration as appropriate).

The overall aim of these linked Standards is to support the achievement of the highest levels of OHS performance through systematic elimination or reduction of risks. Both this Standard and AS/NZS 4804 are intended to provide organizations with the elements of an effective OHSMS which can be integrated with other management requirements, to assist organizations to achieve OHS as well as other social and economic goals. These Standards are not intended to be used to create trade barriers nor change an organization's legal obligations. They are voluntary, useful tools for business and governments to use as little or as much as they choose.

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Legislation in Australia adopts a risk management approach. Legislation in New Zealand adopts a hazard management approach. This legislation may also emphasize a preferred order of control method (often called a hierarchy of controls) which should be implemented in the workplace. The various jurisdictions define this hierarchy in different ways. Readers should note this and will need to ensure that the Standards are used to suit compliance requirements in their jurisdictions.

The emphasis in much legislation and in these Standards is for organizations to develop and implement control actions which, wherever possible, eliminate hazards or isolate people from the hazard. Where this is not possible, work activities should be planned and controlled through administrative means to the extent necessary to prevent injury and illness. In order to achieve these objectives an organization should encourage the implementation of the best practicable methods and technology consistent with the legal obligations to ensure that workplaces are safe and healthy.

These Standards share common management systems principles with environmental management systems Standards such as AS/NZS ISO 14001:1996, *Environmental management systems—Specification with guidance for use* and quality systems Standards like AS/NZS ISO 9001:2000, *Quality systems management—Requirements* and encourage the integration of such management system elements. However, this Standard, and AS/NZS 4804, are more aligned to risk management philosophies and methods as set out in AS/NZS 4360, *Risk management* than are quality management systems standards.

The requirements set out in AS/NZS 4801 and AS/NZS 4804 do not need to be implemented independently of existing OHSMS elements, whether integrated or not. In some cases, existing OHSMS elements will meet the requirements. An organization may elect to continue to use any management system framework, structure or audit tool as required. There may be no need to change an existing OHSMS program or audit framework. This Standard as well as AS/NZS 4801 can be applied to any OHSMS.

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STANDARDS AUSTRALIA/STANDARDS NEW ZEALAND

Australian/New Zealand Standard

Occupational health and safety management systems—Specification with guidance for use

1 Scope

This Standard specifies requirements for an occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS), to enable an organization to formulate a policy and objectives taking into account legislative requirements and information about hazards or risks. It applies to those hazards or risks over which the organization may exert control and over which it can be expected to have an influence. It does not state specific OHS performance outcomes.

This Standard is applicable to any organization that wishes to—

(a) implement, maintain and improve an OHSMS;

(b) assure itself of its conformance with its stated OHS policy;

(c) demonstrate such conformance to others;

(d) seek certification/registration of its OHSMS by an external organization; or

(e) make a self-determination and declaration of conformance with the Standard.

All the requirements in the Standard are intended to be incorporated into any OHSMS. The extent of the application will depend on such factors as the OHS policy of the organization, the nature of its activities and the conditions in which it operates.

Effective implementation of an OHS management system should seek to ensure the organization complies with relevant OHS legislation, standards and codes of practice. However, the implementation of any of the requirements of this Standard, whether or not the organization has gained certification from a third-party certification body or is otherwise recognized, does not in any way assure compliance with legal requirements, or other obligations placed upon the organization by a statutory body. Hence, the implementation, either actual or intended, of this Standard, or parts thereof, would not preclude any action by a statutory body.

NOTES

1) The Standard also provides informative guidance on the use of the specification in Appendix A, a bibliography for further reading in Appendix B, and a correspondence of the requirements of this Standard with AS/NZS ISO 14001 and AS/NZS ISO 9001 in Appendix C.

2) For ease of use, the clauses of the specification and Appendix A have related numbers.

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2 Referenced documents

The following documents are referred to in this Standard:

AS

1885		Measurement of occupational health and safety performance
1885.1	Part 1:	Describing and reporting occupational injuries and disease (known as the National Standard for workplace injury and disease recording)

AS/NZS ISO

9001	Quality management systems—Requirements
14001	Environmental management systems—Specification with guidance for use

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3 Definitions

For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

3.1 Audit

A systematic examination against defined criteria to determine whether activities and related results conform to planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve the organization's policy and objectives.

3.2 Competent person

A person who has acquired through training, qualification, or experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills, including OHS knowledge and skills, qualifying that person to perform the task required by this Standard.

3.3 Continual improvement

Process of enhancing the OHSMS to achieve improvements in overall OHS performances, in line with the organization's OHS policy.

NOTE

The process need not take place in all areas of activity simultaneously.

3.4 Control of hazards/risks

In Australia, the term 'control of risks' is used, to mean the process of elimination or minimization of risks.

In New Zealand, the term 'control of hazards' is used to mean the process of elimination, isolation or minimization of significant hazards.

3.5 Hazard

A source or a situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these.

3.6 Hazard identification

The process of recognizing that a hazard exists and defining its characteristics.

3.7 Hazard/risk assessment

In Australia, the term 'risk assessment' is used to mean the overall process of estimating the magnitude of risk and deciding what actions will be taken.

In New Zealand, the term 'hazard assessment' is used to mean the overall process of determining whether a hazard is significant.

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