



BSI Standards Publication

Occupational health and safety management systems

A practical guide for SMEs

National foreword

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CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org
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1. Foreword

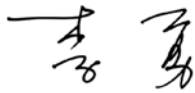
The power of small businesses cannot be underestimated. In around 100 countries worldwide, more than two thirds of total employment comes from small economic units. These businesses play a pivotal role in the global economy and the livelihood of countless numbers of people. The negative effects of workplace injuries, illness or fatalities is a challenge for all kinds of businesses but can prove overwhelming for smaller organizations. Today, more than ever, ensuring a safe and healthy work environment is an important element of doing business worldwide.

ISO 45001:2018 is the world's first international standard on occupational health and safety (OH&S) management, containing agreed good practices from across the world. The primary focus of implementing an OH&S management system is to prevent any kind of work-related injuries, illness or loss of life. Beyond protecting workers, this can lead to better workforce morale, improved products or services and a stable revenue flow. The requirements of the standard assist small organizations as much as they do global conglomerates, governments and society as a whole.

To support smaller entities, both public and private, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) have joined forces to publish this handbook on ISO 45001.

Authored by experts from a working group under the ISO technical committee ISO/TC 283 “Occupational health and safety management”, the handbook pays special attention to the needs of small businesses and provides explanation, as well as practical examples, to main clauses of the standard.

We hope this handbook will support your organization’s effort in creating a safe workspace and help you reap the benefits offered by ISO 45001.



LI Yong
Director General
UNIDO



Sergio Mujica
Secretary-General
ISO

2. About this handbook

This handbook is aimed at small organizations. It provides an overview of the ISO 45001:2018 requirements and sets out approaches for small organizations to implement them, to help you establish an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system.

While the primary purpose of implementing an OH&S management system is to prevent fatalities, injuries and ill health, there are many other benefits.

These include a potential for:

- ▶ improved OH&S performance in your organization, protecting those who work for you and others who could be harmed by your activities;
- ▶ better management of OH&S risks;
- ▶ better identification of opportunities to improve OH&S management;
- ▶ a better approach to incident investigation;
- ▶ a more cooperative culture for greater worker engagement and empowerment;
- ▶ pursuing positive OH&S initiatives that are compatible with your business priorities;
- ▶ improvements in product, process and service quality;
- ▶ better workplace morale;
- ▶ improved employee recruiting and retention; and
- ▶ a more favourable image and reputation (among customers, suppliers and the community).

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The impact of work-related fatalities, injuries or ill health on a small organization can be overwhelming. The effects can include reduced revenue, overtime costs, increased injury and ill health costs, and can even result in a small organization closing. Even larger organizations can experience significant negative effects. Such occurrences are even more devastating if an organization is a family-based operation and the injured or killed worker is a family member.

Each section explains the requirements, why they are important and provides hints on how to go about meeting them. There are also examples for you to adapt to your own needs.

This handbook does not add to or change the requirements of ISO 45001:2018 and the advice given is just that : advice. There are many ways to meet the requirements ; however, it is important that each organization develops a system that works for the organization.

ISO 45001:2018 aligns with other ISO management system standards such as ISO 9001:2015 (quality) and ISO 14001:2015 (environment). The top-level structures are identical, and many requirements are the same and can be easily integrated into the organization's business processes. However, there are also significant technical differences, with additional requirements that are specific to OH&S. If an organization has implemented other ISO management system standards, such as ISO 9001, it will have many of the components common to most management systems in place, for example, an understanding of the context of the organization, competence, documented information, internal audit, nonconformity and corrective action. The task for organizations is to include the remaining OH&S management system requirements into their existing management system(s) and address the remaining OH&S-specific requirements.

All ISO management system standards use the same, simple concept : Plan, Do, Check, Act. This is often referred to as the “PDCA cycle”. The way that the PDCA cycle relates to ISO 45001 is explained and illustrated below.

When you implement an OH&S management system you must understand your context — who you are, what you do, where you do it and who could get ill or hurt. You must also take the lead on making your workplace healthy and safe and get the workers involved.

Plan

plan what you need to do to prevent workplace ill health and injuries
and how you are going to do it

Do

do what you say you are going to do

Check

check how well it is working

Act

fix problems and look for ways to make what you are doing even more
effective

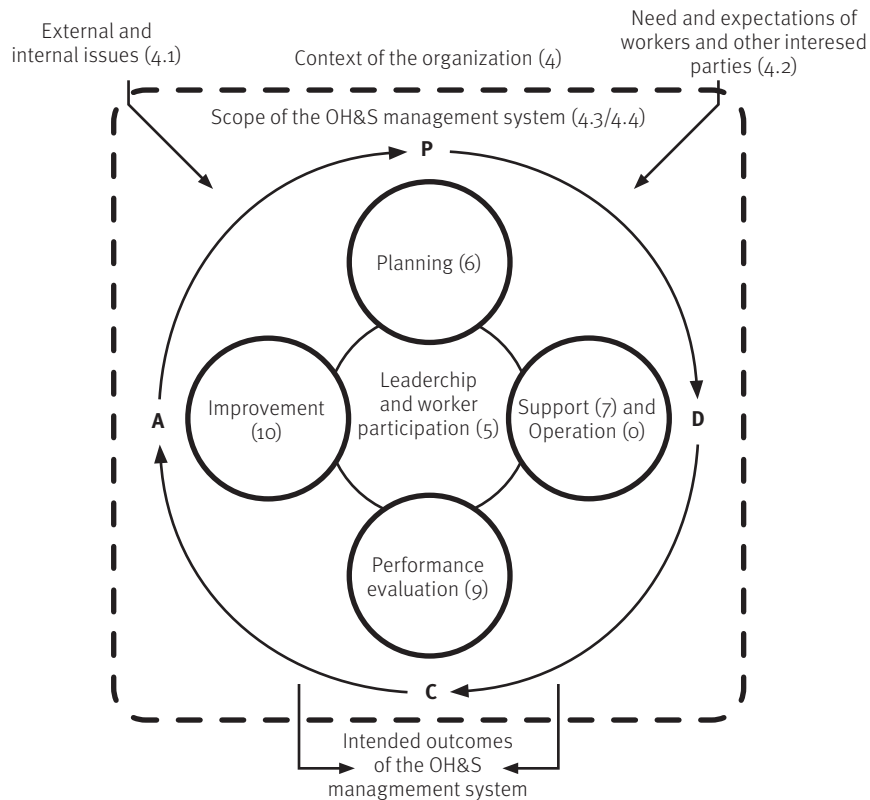


Figure 1: The PDCA cycle in ISO 45001

Since this handbook does not include the text of ISO 45001:2018, you should obtain a copy from your national standards body (find your country and contact details from the list at www.iso.org/members.html) or from ISO (www.iso.org/store.html). The requirements are in the main body of ISO 45001:2018, but you might also find the explanatory information given in Annex A very useful. The sections that follow relate directly to the numbered clause structure of ISO 45001:2018 (Clauses 3 to 10).

3. Terms and definitions

What it is and why is it important?

Clause 3 of ISO 45001:2018 lists terms which are used in the standard with a technical definition. These definitions are not exactly the same as the usual dictionary definitions, so it is important that you as a user of ISO 45001:2018 take the time to understand them, so that you know what is meant by the requirements and how they apply to your management system.

All terms and definitions can be found at <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui>, as well as in ISO 45001:2018.

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4. Context of the organization

4.1 Understanding the organization and its context

What is it and why is it important?

Understanding all the different factors that can affect your business activities is essential for effective OH&S management and preventing people becoming ill or getting injured because of work. It is important to consider issues both inside and outside of your organization that can impact your OH&S performance. This includes, for example, the hazards associated with your work activities as well as laws or regulations.

Implementation approaches

To set up a management system that works for you, you need to fully understand your organization. For example, what does your organization do? Where do you do it? Who could get hurt? How? You also need to consider what can improve – or lessen – your OH&S performance. These can be factors inside your own business or changes in how you do business, as well as external factors such as new laws or pressure from suppliers or customers. Use your current and past health and safety

issues as a starting point for analysing your context. Aim to keep your OH&S system simple and in proportion to your organization's risks and opportunities (see 5.1). You might prefer a more structured method, such as looking at your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to quickly identify any OH&S issues. These can then be reviewed to see which are the most important. When starting, focus on areas where there will be the most benefit, and work to eliminate or reduce the risks that impact your OH&S performance most. A small organization is often less complex than a larger one, so if this is true for you, your context is simpler, and the assessment will be too. However, small doesn't always mean simple and large doesn't always mean complex. So smaller organizations that are more complex should make a more detailed assessment of their context to make sure nothing is missed.

4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of workers and other interested parties

What is it and why is it important?

Your workers obviously have a personal interest in how you manage OH&S: they are the people most likely to become ill or to be hurt if you don't manage the risks effectively. Therefore you need to address their needs and understand their expectations. Getting ongoing input from workers, by involving all workers, and through worker representatives (if you have them) will give you valuable information. You can do this in lots of ways, both informal (e.g. during regular workplace meetings or using suggestion schemes) and formal (e.g. health and safety committees, or other meetings with trade unions and worker representatives). Do what suits your organization best and don't be limited by one method if using several gets more people engaged and actively contributing. Other interested parties – such as visitors, neighbours, customers, regulators and service providers

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(e.g. medical clinics, local fire department), etc. – can also have an impact on the OH&S performance of your management system and need to be considered.

Implementation approaches

As mentioned above, your workers are the most important interested party when considering OH&S. Listen to them (and any representatives), talk to them and consult with them on decisions about OH&S management. They usually have a good understanding of most of the risks they face day-to-day, and they also know what really happens in the workplace. You are more likely to get their engagement, and your system is more likely to succeed, if you involve them.

Other important groups can include:

- ▶ your supply chain: sometimes contracts require evidence that you are managing your OH&S, maybe through a standard such as ISO 45001:2018 or through other evidence (e.g. policies, processes or trade association assessment schemes);
- ▶ contractors: you need to manage the risks when contractors are carrying out work, so you need to know what they are intending to do and how;
- ▶ customers, visitors, members of the public and local communities: they can be affected by your work activities or can impact upon what you do;
- ▶ emergency services: sometimes you need to inform them about specific hazards, so that they are prepared if they are called out to an incident;
- ▶ insurers: sometimes they have specific requirements for how you manage OH&S and can ask for evidence of how you will meet those requirements; and
- ▶ regulators: they can choose to look at how good your management system is when assessing whether you are complying with OH&S law.

As you think about issues affecting different interested parties and possible requirements for your OH&S management system, you can use a simple approach such as asking, “what if?” questions. For example: What if this scenario happens? Who could be harmed, and how? You can also go down to a level of activities

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and tasks, allowing for a thorough analysis of the situation that includes full worker participation.

Don't just get input from workers, even though this is important : think about how to involve other interested parties, so that you also understand their needs and expectations.

Once you choose which needs and expectations (other than legal requirements) you will comply with, these become requirements the organization must meet, at the same level as legal requirements.

Example: Consideration of context issues (4.1) and needs and expectations of interested parties (4.2)

A small organization with 17 workers supplying products locally, has identified **factors** that can affect its activities and OH&S management system, including:

Internal issues

- an experienced manager is due to retire;
- turnover is increasing, and new workers will be needed;
- new workers will need to be recruited, trained and be competent to do their jobs safely;
- machinery is old and will need replacing shortly;
- the new IT system covering workflow is not fully understood by workers;
- there is conflict between managers;
- responsibility for facilities in the workplace is shared with the landlord who will not commit to updating the electrical supply and wiring;
- increased turnover is putting pressure on you to extend working times;
- workers have said they want more contact with the boss and more say on how activities are performed;
- a serious injury has occurred and needs to be investigated to avoid another such incident; and
- you are considering using new materials or producing new products, leading to changes in hazards and risks.

External issues

- an important licence for the business is due for renewal at the end of the year and is essential to continue normal work;
- an external audit has been carried out and has made recommendations on how to meet new laws that will apply in the next six months;
- the external audit also recommended a review of how contractors are selected and how workers are involved in assessing risks of their work;
- the machinery retail-supplier no longer exists, but leasing is available;
- customers are becoming more demanding;
- neighbours have complained about noise; and
- the regulator is due to make visits in the area and is targeting falls from heights and work-related ill health.

4.3 Determining the scope of the OH&S management system

What is it and why is it important?

Determining the scope of the system is important because this is when you decide what the system covers and what it does not cover. The scope should only be determined after you have identified your internal and external issues, and understand the needs and expectations of workers and other relevant interested parties. You need to document the scope in whatever way suits you – for example, an electronic or paper document, an audio or video recording or even a visual display.

Implementation approaches

When you decide the scope for the OH&S management system you need to consider all of your work activities, including those that are not day-to-day, such as maintenance and foreseeable emergencies. This should include all activities that you can control, as well as those you don't fully control but can influence, such as outsourced activities: in fact, anything that can impact your OH&S performance.

4.4 OH&S management system

What is it and why is it important?

An OH&S management system is a systematic way to identify workplace hazards, and assess risks and opportunities in order to achieve its intended outcomes, which are to:

- prevent ill health and injury, and ;
- make workplaces healthy and safe.

To make sure it works as intended, your OH&S management system needs to be supported by leaders as well as other workers, and regularly reviewed and improved.

Implementation approaches

Every organization can choose how it will meet the ISO 45001 requirements to suit their own business. You decide the extent to which your organization can integrate OH&S processes into general business processes, so that you are preventing work-related ill health and injury, and still meeting your business objectives. For example, business goals should not mean people working so fast that it leads to safety shortcuts or burn out.

The basic framework of an OH&S management system follows the “Plan, Do, Check Act” format, which is explained in the section entitled ‘About this handbook’.

Once the organization’s context is understood, and hazards and risks have been identified, then it is advisable to start by addressing a small number of important issues so that significant improvements can be made and sustained. Over time, additional issues can be tackled.

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5. Leadership and worker participation

5.1 Leadership and commitment

What is it and why is it important?

Leadership is motivating a group of people to act towards achieving common objectives. In the context of OH&S, leadership is essential to help set values and maximize efficiency and so achieve the agreed OH&S performance objectives. It is critically important that leaders set OH&S objectives through consultation and participation with the rest of the workers.

Leadership at different levels of management is essential for an effective OH&S management system. Effective managers deliver the message that worker health and safety is a top organizational value equal to business growth, on-time performance and profitability. Maintaining worker health and safety as a top-level value creates a foundation for a strong, positive, culture that supports OH&S. It facilitates trust and cooperation between senior decision-makers (top management) and workers that can extend beyond OH&S into other operations. Over time, good health and safety performance tends to improve business growth, profitability, worker retention, and product and service quality.

Implementation approaches

Leaders can demonstrate their commitment to OH&S by providing the necessary resources and communicating a clear vision of OH&S for the organization. Top management is responsible and held accountable for the health and safety of workers. Here are some fundamental management leadership activities to consider:

- ▶ develop and use effective ways of communicating the OH&S policy and why it is important in improving health and safety;
- ▶ use different ways of communicating to address literacy issues and disabilities, such as visual and hearing impairment;
- ▶ identify hazards to manage OH&S risks;
- ▶ analyse data from feedback and observations;
- ▶ develop objectives to reduce risk levels associated with hazards;
- ▶ monitor and evaluate the extent to which OH&S is integrated into business processes;
- ▶ monitor and evaluate the OH&S management system for effectiveness and improvement;
- ▶ establish an effective process for worker participation and consultation;
- ▶ apply the necessary corrective actions; and
- ▶ identify and lead the implementation of work practices and initiatives that drive a strong, positive, culture that supports OH&S.

There are approaches that have been shown to be effective in implementing an OH&S management system. The following ideas can help you ensure your organization's OH&S management system operates effectively and continually improves OH&S performance:

- ▶ establish and support a functional health and safety committee;
- ▶ involve workers in all aspects of the implementation of the OH&S system, using the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle;
- ▶ give workers the resources needed to improve OH&S performance, including the ability to report incidents and hazards;

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- ▶ support the efforts of other managers in developing their leadership skills in OH&S;
- ▶ reach workers using personal interactions, such as pictures (for those who have difficulty reading), notice boards, staff meetings and posters;
- ▶ encourage workers to increase their understanding of the requirements of the OH&S management system;
- ▶ encourage workers to make recommendations for improvement and to report hazards or incidents;
- ▶ ensure workers are free from reprisals when they do report something;
- ▶ encourage workers to perform at the highest levels of health and safety; and
- ▶ give workers the appropriate levels of training to do their job and improve OH&S performance.

5.2 OH&S policy

What is it and why is it important?

The OH&S policy is a statement of key principles that reflects management's commitment to OH&S. It sets the intention and direction for the organization and describes the expected results from systematically managing health and safety. Therefore, the most senior level of management (referred to as "top management" in ISO 45001) is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining it. It is important for the success of the organization's OH&S management system.

Implementation approaches

Make the policy visible and available in your organization so that it informs workers, contractors, subcontractors and other organizations on which you are dependent. Explain what the policy means to them, including your commitment towards

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continual improvement of OH&S performance both at an organizational and an individual level. The following are a few things to keep in mind :

- ▶ keep the policy short and simple, using clear understandable language ;
- ▶ check that the policy is aligned with other policies in the organization and that the commitments are relevant to the organization's challenges ;
- ▶ involve workers at the earliest opportunity in the development of the policy, e.g. by asking them for suggestions on how to better control hazards and risks and involving them at policy development meetings ;
- ▶ inform workers how the policy affects them, so they understand its relevance to their work activities and keeping them and others healthy and safe ;
- ▶ focus on the OH&S policy at regular meetings, so that workers and contractors understand its importance ;
- ▶ the policy could be presented during meetings and training sessions, as a poster, as a web page or anything else that fulfils the organization's needs ; and
- ▶ define dates and other triggers for reviewing the policy and let workers and other interested parties know about any changes that are made.

5.3 Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities

What is it and why is it important ?

Identification and communication of operational roles, and related responsibilities and authorities, are essential for the implementation and function of the OH&S management system. This often requires initiatives to raise awareness and specific training to gain the necessary competence.