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Beginner's guide to ISO 45001





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Welcome to the world of ISO 45001. If you're new to ISO Standards, especially ISO 45001, you're in the perfect place! In this starter guide, we'll walk you through all the essentials you need to know and the key requirements for ISO 45001 to help you get started on improving Health & Safety in your workplace.

What is ISO 45001?

ISO 45001 is the international Standard that focuses on occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) management systems. It's designed to help organisations of all sizes and in any industry create safer and healthier workplaces by providing a framework to identify, control, and minimise risks related to Health & Safety.

It's one of the best ways that your business can show it's taking Health & Safety seriously. With regulations getting stricter, higher fines for businesses that don't adhere to legal requirements, and increased concern about workplace safety from employees and clients, businesses are realising the importance of prioritising Health & Safety. And, after all, employees are the lifeblood of any business. When they feel safe and valued, it positively impacts everything — from client relationships to product quality!

Why use ISO 45001?

- ✓ Reduce workplace accidents
- ✓ Demonstrate commitment to Health & Safety
- ✓ Deal with risks
- ✓ Better legal compliance
- ✓ Enhance reputation
- ✓ Increase employee productivity and minimise downtime
- ✓ Boost employee morale





Why is ISO 45001 important?

Safety at work matters, not just for legal compliance but for the wellbeing of everyone involved. Let's take a look at some numbers...

**1.8
million**

working people suffering from a work-related illness*

135

workers killed in work-related accidents*

**0.6
million**

workers sustaining a workplace non-fatal injury*

**35.2
million**

working days lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury*

**£20.7
billion**

estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions**

* HSE statistics for Great Britain 2022/23

** HSE statistics for Great Britain 2021/22



Key requirements of ISO 45001

ISO 45001 shares a common structure (known as Annex SL) with other ISO management system Standards like ISO 9001 (quality management) and ISO 14001 (environmental management). It's built around seven key areas, so let's break these down!

1 Context

What?

This means all the internal and external factors that affect your business. You need to outline and communicate your organisation's responsibilities. By setting out your organisation's goals, commitments and responsibilities you're proving that your business is committed to providing a safe working environment.

How?

To get started, think about who your organisation is responsible for in terms of Health & Safety. This includes not just employees, but also visitors and contractors. Knowing who is impacted will help you pinpoint areas that need attention.

Once you've identified who is affected, you'll need to work out your legal responsibilities toward them, their needs and their expectations. Think ahead about how any future projects or changes might impact your Health & Safety plans.

It's important that you document and communicate this information throughout your organisation.





2 Leadership

What?

Leaders at all levels should set a clear purpose and direction for Health & Safety. A good leader will set an example for everyone by actively participating in and caring about the OH&S management system. This sets the tone for everyone else and creates an environment where everyone feels they can and should contribute to the company's Health & Safety goals.

How?

As a business leader, taking responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of your employees, contractors, and visitors is essential. Start by understanding their needs and expectations. Then use this information to shape your Health & Safety policies.

Think of your Health & safety policy as your company's mission statement for Health & Safety — a roadmap for preventing injuries and promoting wellbeing within your organisation. Make sure to communicate this policy to all staff, visitors, and contractors so that everyone knows what's expected of them. You'll need to review your policy regularly to make sure it remains relevant to your business and complies with legal obligations. This ongoing commitment keeps everyone aligned and working toward a common goal of workplace safety.





3 Planning

What?

This involves establishing, implementing and maintaining processes and objectives. Planning shows how forward-thinking and proactive your business is while allowing you to react quickly to any risks and opportunities that come your way.

How?

Start by defining a set of Health & Safety objectives. A specific list of goals sets the expectations of your employees and anyone else involved. Think about how you will measure the success – or failure – of these objectives, what resources you'll need and who will be responsible for them.

Next, establish procedures and controls to eliminate hazards and risks. This includes considering the behaviour and capabilities of your employees, as well as people who aren't in the workplace, such as contractors or visitors.

Finally, determine which legal Health & Safety requirements your organisation must follow and establish a method to stay updated with any changes. Make sure to record all of these areas and keep your documents up to date.

4 Support

What?

Support involves determining and providing the resources needed to achieve your goals. By allocating the right resources, you'll make sure your business is in the best position to achieve its Health & Safety objectives.

How?

Supporting a management system covers many areas, from providing necessary resources to training staff on how to handle specific issues. When it comes to Health & Safety, it's essential to make sure everyone in your organisation is trained to identify and respond to hazards, risks, and emergency situations.

Even if someone isn't trained to handle a risk directly, they should know who to report it to. Empower your team by giving them the resources, training, and authority to act responsibly. And why not encourage them further by recognising and rewarding their contributions to maintaining a safe workplace.



5 Operation

What?

Your management system needs to be integrated into your day-to-day operations. Instead of reacting after an incident occurs, think of occupational Health & Safety as an essential part of your business operations.



How?

Start by considering how to integrate Health & Safety goals into every stage of your business's life cycle. Use these insights to develop controls aimed at eliminating hazards and reducing risks. Then it's time to establish a plan to address business changes, unforeseen issues, and emergency situations.

Remember to document and communicate your processes. Regularly review and update your documents, and make sure changes are communicated to relevant parties such as employees and contractors. This proactive approach keeps everyone informed and safety-focused!

6 Performance evaluation

What?

Monitoring, measuring, analysing, and evaluating performance is like giving your business a regular check-up. It helps you catch and fix issues early on before they turn into bigger problems.



How?

For each control you've established, figure out what needs to be measured to assess its success. Create guidelines for consistent measurement, especially for subjective areas. After collecting data, analyse it to see if you've met your goals and if there's room for improvement.

Internal audits are great for gathering this data and assessing how different departments are sticking to the Standard. Document everything—from your data collection methods to your analysis process—and communicate this with relevant parties. Keeping everyone in the loop will make for a smooth and effective evaluation process!



7 Improvement

What?

Successful organisations learn from both their successes and failures. The best way to learn how your business can grow and repeat its successes and avoid past mistakes is to review and evaluate performance.



Get started today

ISO 45001 is a powerful tool for organisations looking to prioritise Health & Safety. We hope this guide has given you a great start on creating a best-practice Health & Safety management system for your business. And if you're ready to take the next step toward ISO 45001 certification (and all the benefits it comes with) and want to get the guidance of over 60 ISO experts, simply sign up to Be Certified and gain instant access to our ISO 45001 software. We're here to support you on your journey to safer workplaces and better business outcomes.

How?

Create a plan for analysing your business' performance. Set up a schedule to make sure regular reviews take place. During these reviews, look at the results of internal audits, overall Health & Safety performance, and any new developments like updated legislation.

Be sure to take detailed notes during discussions and record any agreed-upon actions. Follow up on these actions in the next review to keep your processes effective and up-to-date. This proactive approach ensures your business is always on the right track!

Did you know?

Going hand in hand with ISO 45001 is ISO 45003, the pioneering Standard addressing psychological wellbeing in the workplace! This means you can comprehensively manage both physical and psychosocial risks in one smart system – making sure you're taking care of the mental health and wellbeing side of Health & Safety. Together, they offer a complete framework for continual improvement in Health & Safety, creating a positive and engaged workplace and enhancing your business' reputation.



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