



ISO 45001

Why contractors play a key role in the new global OH&S standard

Released March 2018, ISO 45001 is the new international standard for OH&SMS (Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems). With increasing globalisation, international supply chains are becoming more complex, often crossing multiple borders, which can create black spots in health and safety management. ISO 45001 requires a fundamental shift in an organisation's typical insular view of health and safety management, requiring organisations to consider their external circle of influence and third-party relationships, with new requirements for outsourcing and contractor management.

Why ISO certify?

While the new ISO management systems (MS) standard can be adopted by any organisation of any size or industry, organisations are not necessarily obliged to acquire ISO 45001 certification. While there is an unquestionable ethical and moral impetus to invest in systems that strive for the safest workplace, the material benefits are equally compelling. Inadequate MS and poor practices that fail to reduce or eliminate work-related injuries can cripple organisations through the loss of skilled employees and productivity, business interruptions, higher

insurance premiums, legal action and severe reputational damage.

Whether you chose to comply with an industry, country or international standard such as ISO 45001, investing in health and safety MS is a fundamental business practice. Being able to demonstrate quality health and safety systems through independent certification provides customers, business partners, investors and governments, the added confidence that an organisation is committed to workplace safety and is operating to international best practice.

Moving from OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001

For organisations that use other ISO MS, they'll appreciate that ISO 45001 uses Annex SL, the document framework used in later ISO MS standards. This makes it easier to align and integrate ISO 45001 with other MS, such as ISO 14001 (Environmental) and ISO 9001 (Quality). The migration period for organisations to certify

under ISO 45001 runs from March 2018-2021. This paper addresses some of the key changes and considerations for contractor management. Organisations seeking to migrate or adopt the new ISO standard, should consult an accredited certification body.



Contractor Management

The expansion of ISO 45001 to include contractors is a significant change from OHSAS 18001. Organisations are now required to show that they are using the same set of processes and systems for formal employees and contractors. This doesn't just mean that the existing processes for contractors need to become

stricter; rather than focus on one group or another, the key is to adopt the same process for the entire workforce. While extending OH&SMS to contractors may sound simple, there are some challenges to overcome, to yield the full benefits of contractor involvement.

Leadership

One of the fundamental principles of ISO 45001 is the shift from "managing" to driving "leadership" involvement in health and safety. This top-down approach is the key ingredient to creating a safety-first culture, which is crucial to empowering 'all' workers to openly raise and share safety concerns. While ISO 45001 requires processes that ensure all works including

contractors participate in safety and risk assessments, it is not uncommon for contractors to avoid providing constructive advice, in the fear that it could be perceived as negative feedback to a client. The possible implications of this perceived criticism can extend well beyond the worker, to the contractor company, and as a result, these workers often stay silent.

Risks vs Hazard

While a strong safety culture is key, another fundamental shift in ISO 45001 standards is the identification and assessment of risks, to foster preventative action. What many organisations may not recognise, is the value contractors offer organisations in identifying opportunities to improve safety and reduce workplace injuries. While contractors often provide a specialist skill and experience, they are also exposed to multiple organisations and industries.

This experience provides beneficial first-hand insight into possible risks, which may not have been uncovered by the organisation. Involving and encouraging contractors to share current and more importantly past experiences, may provide fundamental and key learnings in preventing workplace injury. This direct experience may also assist organisations in developing practical action plans.

Documented Information

Another feature of ISO 45001 is the requirement for "documented information", this includes the creation, updating, storage and general control of all documented information and records. When it comes to contractor management, the organisation should demonstrate that there is sufficient governance and documented information for evaluating contractors' capabilities and compliance. This may include,

checking for licence and certification expiries, ensuring that the correct name is on the work permit, and that the contractors are qualified to do the work they are performing. Even when outsourcing, the organisation retains some degree of obligation when it comes to maintaining a rigorous, documented process to ensure health and safety protocols are followed.



Contractor Involvement

The value that all workers offer in risk identification and injury prevention has been fortified in ISO 45001. To satisfy ISO 45001 organisations must develop programs, processes and communication plans that involve employee participation, which extends to contractors and other interested parties.

While the value that contractors can offer in terms of hazard prevention and identification is indisputable, here are a few steps organisations can take to help foster effective contractor involvement.

01. Set Targets

Often contractor communication is limited to inductions. Organisations should consider mechanisms to ensure contractors are also involved in safety committees and forums. To ensure compliance and adequate representation,

there may be value in setting quotas in participation, that could be aligned to the proportion of contractors that make up the organisations workforce.

02. Broaden Communication

Review and consider how safety alerts and updates can be shared externally. This may be onsite by inviting contractors to tool box

meetings or by integrating safety information into the contractor companies own communication channels and vice versa.

03. Be Proactive

This is by far the most sensitive and challenging aspect, ensuring contractors feel comfortable raising concerns without bias. Setting targets that require OH&S representatives to systematically and proactively seek-out contractor feedback

and opportunity for improvement, as opposed to waiting for contractors to raise an issue (reactive), may be the first practical step in shifting the safety culture. This also opens the door to learn from a contractors' past experiences.

How iPRO Can Help

iPRO offers a real-time solution for contractor compliance documentation monitoring and verification. The iPRO Maturity Model assists organisations in defining best practices for contractor management and running a gap analysis on current methodologies.

Find out more at ipro.net

