

## ISO 14001



**Gerry Farrell is managing director of Aberdeen Fluid System Technologies, distributor of Swagelok® fluid systems, used by clients in the food and drink production and oil and gas sectors. Employing 20 people, the company complies with environmental-management standard ISO 14001. As Gerry explains, this has helped to cut operational costs and open up new markets**

“Aberdeen Fluid System Technologies was established in 1979. Although we already had other management standards in place, in 2002 we decided to introduce ISO 14001.

The decision was taken for many reasons, but primarily because more of our customers – and potential customers – only wanted to do business with businesses that complied with ISO 14001.

We also knew the standard would provide a mechanism to help us adhere to our regulatory requirements and improve our overall business performance.

Applying the standard has brought plenty of benefits. Not least, it has opened up new markets for us that we would not have otherwise broken into. Just one example is the pharmaceutical industry, which generally requires suppliers to be ISO 14001-compliant.

For one recent project tender for a major pharmaceutical company, we were told that having an environmental-management system standard in place gave us a 50 per cent weighting towards our winning the contract.

It has also reduced our energy consumption by around 35 per cent, while cutting our packaging costs to almost zero.

We now also recycle and re-use all of the packaging materials that come into the business. Before the standard was implemented we would spend around £1,700 each year on padded bags alone.

Another big benefit is that working towards a shared goal has brought our team even closer together. We have a ‘switch-off’ programme in place, for example, and this links our energy-cost savings to our donations to charity.

We also have a league table, so if someone leaves their PC on overnight they are likely to find a note on their screen the next morning saying they have just lost the team five points. It’s just a bit of fun, but it helps to motivate everyone to work towards the same objective.

If I were asked to offer my advice to other small businesses on whether to comply with the ISO 14001 standard – I’d simply say go for it and you’ll see the results.”

To find out more about Aberdeen Fluid System Technologies visit [www.swagelok.com/aberdeen](http://www.swagelok.com/aberdeen)



“Applying the standard has brought my company plenty of benefits. Not least, it has opened up new markets that we would not have otherwise broken into”

### What is ISO 14001?

First published in 1996, ISO 14001 is an international standard that specifies the requirements and principles for an effective environmental-management system. It enables managers to set objectives and put in place strategies for improving a company's impact on the environment.