



Certified fit for the road

Tim Sparey and Suzanne Fribbins explain the new BS ISO 39001 driving standard

THE spread of certified management systems among Western businesses over the past 10 years has coincided with the realisation that, for many organisations, road risk is one of their greatest areas of risk exposure. It is also one of the hardest to control since exposure happens outside the workplace.

These parallel developments, along with the desire to reduce the heavy toll of road accidents worldwide led the International Standards Organisation (ISO) to develop a new management standard on transport safety. ISO 39001 (available in the UK as BS ISO 39001) was developed over more than two years with input from organisations in 40 countries, ranging from the International Road Federation to UK charities RoSPA and Roadsafte, which manages the Driving for Better Business campaign.

BS ISO 39001, which was published late last year, is designed for anyone trying to manage road risk, including hauliers, public transport operators and businesses with mobile field forces.

ISO recently created a high-level structure for all its new and revised management systems standards (see page 24). The draft of the revised ISO 14001 brings this new structure into the environmental standard and, as a newly created standard, 39001 fits it from the start. In this common framework, Section Three defines terms and definitions, while Section Four sets down requirements for placing the road risk management system in the context of the individual organisation

and scoping the system. Section Five deals with leadership (senior management roles and responsibilities), management commitment more generally and translating the system into policies and job descriptions.

BS 39001 is also intended to mesh with the wider safety management standard BS OHSAS 18001 — the two share an approach to accident investigation as well as similar requirements for documentation on policies, procedures and monitoring.

Section 6 on planning the traffic safety management system requires the organisation to assign responsibility for managing it, setting targets and long-term and interim objectives, defining the resources needed and the timescales for implementation, along with metrics for evaluation. The standard uses the same plan-do-check-act model which underpins other ISO management system standards.

Must do better

The requirements for managing road risk, set out in Section 6 and amplified in the guidance in Annex A, provide guidance in implementation. An organisation transporting people or goods will have to assess its risk exposure by measuring its traffic mileage by road user and vehicle type. It has to implement policies on all aspects of road use, including route planning, vehicle roadworthiness, safety equipment and training for drivers, driver fitness (including the effects of fatigue, distraction, alcohol and drugs), vehicle capacity, securing loads and emergency preparedness.

The standard requires an organisation to show a detailed and documented system for monitoring and investigating road accidents. More importantly, as with most certified management standards, anyone signing up to BS ISO 39001 commits their organisation to demonstrating continuous improvement to their auditors if they want to retain certification. For fleet operators this entails committing themselves to reducing at-fault accidents year on year.

Home energy efficiency company the Mark Group became the first firm in the UK to be independently assessed and certified by the British Standards Institution (BSI) to BS ISO 39001 at the end of last year.

As operator of a fleet of more 1100 vehicles, road safety is critical to the group. Its environmental and road safety manager Jamie Bogg says he expects the proportion of at-fault road accidents among the firm's fleet to halve from 40% to 20% by next year as a result.

"Working to fully implement BS ISO 39001 has allowed us to take a structured and independent review of our existing provisions," says Bogg, "but more importantly, by separating road safety from our health and safety policies and procedures, we have increased focus in what is our highest risk activity: driving for work."

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