❯ ISO 45001 Whitepaper

A new International Standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

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Introduction

In October 2013 a project committee, ISO PC 283, met in London to create the first working draft of ISO 45001. Using OHSAS 18001 - the internationally recognized and adopted British Standard for Occupational Health and Safety – as the blueprint, the standard will also be aligned with ISO 9001 (Quality Management) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management).

There are currently 50 countries and international organizations, including the International Labour Organization, involved in this work. The new standard is expected in October 2016.

BS OHSAS 18001 The first British Standard for occupational health and safety management

Before 1999, organizations had to choose from a range of national health and safety standards and proprietary certification schemes. But this led to confusion and fragmentation in the market, while undermining the credibility of individual schemes and creating potential trade barriers.

Drawing on the best of these existing standards and schemes, the OHSAS Project Group (with BSI as the secretariat) published the OHSAS 18000 Series in 1999. The Series had two specifications: 18001 focused on the requirements for an effective OHS management system, while 18002 offered practical implementation guidelines. By 2005 around 16,000 organizations in more than 80 countries were using OHSAS 18001.

Becoming a British Standard

In July 2007, the OHSAS 18001 specification was updated and more closely aligned with the framework of other management system standards such as ISO 14001. This helped organizations to bring their existing management systems more easily in line with the standard. The UK then decided to adopt OHSAS 18001 as a British Standard and created BS OHSAS 18001.

How the standard works

An efficient occupational health and safety management system promotes a safer and healthier working environment for everyone involved. So BS OHSAS 18001 is designed to help organizations implement a framework that identifies and controls health and safety risks, reduce potential accidents, aids legislative compliance and improves overall performance.
It lays out all the elements that can be integrated with other management systems to boost a company's occupational health and safety performance. The standard also demonstrates how to develop and implement a policy with the right objectives for organizations of all types and sizes, covering diverse geographical, cultural and social conditions.

The **importance** of health and safety worldwide

From the early 1990s a number of parties from diverse geographical and economic regions voiced their concerns about occupational health and safety systems across the globe. The following statistics on health and safety accidents and their related costs – shows why:

2.2 million
workers lose their lives globally every year due to work-related accidents and diseases[1]

Over 4.1 million
US workers suffer serious illness or injury every year[1]

26.4 million
UK working days were lost due to work related illnesses and workplace injuries[2]

4%
of the world's GNP is lost due to work-related accidents and diseases[3]

6,300
workers die everyday as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases[4]

These statistics prove that there's an immediate need for organizations around the globe to improve their health and safety management systems – and this need will only grow in the future. As globalization escalates, more consumers and customers expect organizations to be ethical in every aspect of their business, including the way they treat their employees. In recent years the media has exposed a number of organizations' malpractices, leading to a significant negative impact on their brands and the loss of confidence in their business.

Who will benefit from ISO 45001?

With an international standard in place, small, medium and large organizations in any sector can set the benchmark for their health and safety governance, policies and practices across different geographical areas, countries, cultures and jurisdictions. This will promote better communication on shared issues, principles and best practice in global trade. This standard will enable companies to comply with regulatory requirements, including accountability, ethical and corporate governance specifications, as well as practice audits.

Once they have implemented a standardized framework, they can align their operations with national and international legislation and codes of conduct - improving risk management and emergency planning. ISO 45001 will also enable organizations to set and assess performance measures for service providers. As a result, companies will be able to reduce occupational health and safety accidents and their related costs, while promoting the wellbeing of their employees, site visitors and neighbours.

ISO 45001 will also have a direct impact on society. With more internationally recognized occupational health and safety systems in place, the number of incidents and accidents will decrease, with less disruption to operational processes. This means fewer emergency treatments at the workplace and hospitals, less people being removed from sites and reduced long term care for those who are unable to return to work following an accident.

References

1 – US Department of Labor Report 2013
2 – UK Health & Safety Executive Report 2010/11
3 – Global and Asian trends for Safety and Health at Work 2006
4 – ILO statistics

> **ISO 45001** Time for a global change

Even though various parties have expressed the need for an international health and safety standard for some time, many global organizations were concerned about how it would affect and work with their local regulations. To address these challenges and protect workers around the world, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is a key player in the development of ISO 45001.

Why the world needs ISO 45001

Every day across the globe, horrific statistics for health and safety incidents, accidents and their related costs are recorded. Although companies tend to use generic health and safety guidelines or national and consortia standards, none of these demonstrate global conformity.

A recent OHSAS Standards and Certificates Survey has shown a rapid increase in the use of OHSAS 18001 and equivalent standards over the last decade. With over 127 countries currently using these

standards, there's a worldwide need to harmonize health and safety management systems using an international standard and share best practices.

Making a global difference

The need for an international standard in this field can be seen at local, national, regional and global levels – applying to both developing and developed countries. With an international standard to refer to together with the right infrastructure and training, these organizations will be able to address their risks better in future.

More and more companies also want detailed information about their suppliers' occupational health and safety practices to protect their brands. This motivates suppliers to implement better and internationally recognized systems to establish good health and safety practices. Third party certification helps to demonstrate that a business is meeting its

requirements effectively whilst the process of achieving and maintaining certification helps ensure that it is continually improving across all areas of the organization.

ISO 45001 will support new areas of management systems to ensure better compatibility and systems governance, making the implementation within an organization a lot smoother. Once published, the standard will apply to any organization wishing to:

- Establish and implement an internationally recognized occupational health and safety management system to reduce or minimize risks to personnel and other relevant parties

- Maintain and constantly improve their health and safety performance

- Keep all operations in line with their stated health and safety policies to an internationally recognized standard.

❯ **ISO 45001** What happens next?

2014	**2015**	**2016**
Q2 the committee draft is expected **Q4** the Draft International Standard (DIS) is expected which will be made available for public comment	The Final Draft International Standard (FDIS) is expected sometime in 2015	**ISO 45001** is expected to be published in late 2016

The timeline above gives an idea of what will happen in future, but is subject to change

Although the project committee is using BS OHSAS 18001 as the proof of concept for ISO 45001, they are still subjected to the consensus approach used to develop all new ISO standards.

The project committee has produced ISO 45001's first working draft in October 2013. They also created an outline project plan for the rest of their meetings and the remaining drafts – all in line with standard ISO procedures. Over the next three years, they will meet a number of times to develop the standard further and make sure all the countries involved with this work agree.

The draft standard will be made available at the DIS and FDIS stage when interested parties can review and register their comments via their respective National Standards Body, which in the UK is BSI.

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