

The Real Cost of Managing British Standards: Single Copy vs. Subscription

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Compliance with British Standards is essential for businesses and organizations across industries to meet certification, contractual, and regulatory obligations. Understanding the differences between these two options is key to determining which is right for your organization. Below is a clear comparison to help you make an informed choice.

Single Copy PDF Purchases	Subscription with BSI Knowledge
Individually licensed standards require separate purchases for each user and each standard. This approach can lead to inefficiencies and higher costs. Key considerations include:	A BSI Knowledge subscription provides centralized access to multiple users along with tools to automate and streamline compliance processes. Benefits include:
1. Access Restrictions • Limited to one user per license—no sharing or copying allowed. • Additional licenses must be purchased for each additional user.	1. Shared Access • Centralized, team-wide access for up to 30 users at no extra cost. • Eliminates duplicate purchases for the same standard.
2. High Per-Document Costs • Each standard costs approximately £100 per user (BSI Member rate). • Example: 5 people needing access to 10 standards costs £5,000 annually.	2. Cost Efficiency • Annual subscription starts at just £1,400 - covering access to 10 standards. • Example: Cost for 5 people accessing 10 standards is £1,400, a significant saving compared to £5,000 for single copies.
3. Manual Tracking of Updates • Staff must dedicate time to monitor updates and revisions manually.	3. Automated Updates • Standards are automatically updated and tracked, reducing manual effort.
4. Time-Intensive Gap Analysis • Identifying changes between old and new versions is labor-intensive.	4. Efficient Gap Analysis • Built-in tools provide a quick overview of changes between versions, saving time and reducing errors.
5. Procurement Complexity • Requires multiple purchase orders and coordination with finance for every standard.	5. Streamlined Procurement • Single annual payment simplifies procurement and reduces administrative overhead.
6. Audit Preparation Challenges • Manual tracking increases administrative burdens and risk of non-compliance.	6. Audit-Ready Compliance • Automated compliance tracking ensures all documentation and change logs are readily available.



Simplified Access to British Standards

Option 1: Single Copy	Component	Option 2: BSI Knowledge Subscription PDFs
Single user only, DRM restricts illegal sharing	Access	Shared with your entire team
Expensive, with limited access and multiple payments required for each standard or user	Cost	Affordable, with unlimited team access and a single payment covering all annual consumption
Single-user licenses, no sharing allowed / duplicate purchases required	Licensing	Permissive licensing for multiple users
No tracking of updates or revisions	Updates	Automatic updates and notifications
Tools to analyze gaps in standards coverage	Gap Analysis	Tools to analyze gaps in standards coverage
Separate purchase for each standard	Procurement	Single payment covers the entire subscription
Higher due to separate purchases	Cost per Standard	Lower overall cost per standard
Manual processes = potential for missed requirements / higher risk	Compliance	Automated processes, reduced risk and ensures compliance with regulations
Option 1: Single Copy	Why make the switch?	Option 2: BSI Knowledge Subscription PDFs
• Purchase standards individually for each user—expensive and time-consuming. • No tools for tracking updates or comparing versions. • Example: £2,500 + VAT for 5 people accessing 5 standards.		• Centralized access for your whole team—no extra cost per user. • Automatic updates and built-in tools for gap analysis. • Entry-level subscription is the same price as just 12 single standards!