



Swiss Association  
for Quality and Management  
Systems (SQS)

SQS customer support

# ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety

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## 1. *Background*

On March 12, 2018, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published the new ISO 45001 Standard for Occupational health and safety (OH&S) management systems. This internationally accepted standard is intended to enable companies to manage OH&S risks and improve their approach to preventing injury and illness. Implementing an OH&S management system is a strategic decision because the organization in question can use the system as part of its sustainability initiatives and ensure the work environment is safer and healthier for employees and relevant third parties while also improving profitability. An organization's activities can pose a risk of injury or ill-health and can result in a serious impairment of health, or even fatality, to those working on its behalf; consequently, it is important for the organization to eliminate or minimize its OH&S risks by taking appropriate preventive measures. An organization's OH&S management system can translate its intentions to prevent incidents into a systematic and ongoing set of processes (supported by the use of appropriate methods and tools) and can reinforce the organization's commitment to proactively improving its OH&S performance.

## 2. *Main focus of ISO 45001*

The international ISO 45001 standard specifies OH&S management system requirements and guidelines for implementing them in practice, thus giving organizations the tools to improve their OH&S management systems by preventing injury and health issues in a proactive way.

## 3. *Who are the intended users of the Standard?*

The simple answer is: all organizations.

It should not matter if your organization is a micro business or a global conglomerate, if it is a non-profit organization, a charity, an academic institution, or a government department. As long as your organization has people working on its behalf, or who may be affected by its activities, then using a systematic approach to managing health and safety will bring benefits to it.

The standard can be used by small low risk operations as well as by high risk and large complex organizations. While the standard requires that OH&S risks are addressed and controlled, it also takes a risk based approach to the OH&S management system itself, to ensure a) that it is effective and b) being improved to meet an organization's ever changing «context». This risk based approach is consistent with the way organizations manage their other «business» risks and hence encourages the integration of the standard's requirements into the organizations' overall management processes.

#### 4. Important content of ISO 45001 at a glance

An ISO 45001 based OH&S management system will enable an organization to improve its OH&S performance by

- developing and implementing an OH&S policy and OH&S objectives
- establishing systematic processes which consider its «context» and which take into account its risks and opportunities, and its legal and other requirements
- determining the hazards and OH&S risks associated with its activities; seeking to eliminate them or putting in controls to minimize their potential effects
- establishing operational controls to manage its OH&S risks and its legal and other requirements
- increasing awareness of its OH&S risks
- evaluating its OH&S performance and seeking to improve it, by taking appropriate actions
- ensuring workers take an active role in OH&S matters

In combination, these measures will ensure, that an organization's reputation as a safe place to work will be promoted, and can have more direct benefits, such as

- improving its ability to respond to regulatory compliance issues
- reducing the overall costs of incidents
- reducing downtime and the costs of disruption to operations
- reducing the cost of insurance premiums
- reducing absenteeism and employee turnover rates
- recognition for having achieved an international benchmark (which may in turn influence customers who are concerned about their social responsibilities)

#### 5. Structure and content of ISO 45001

The ISO 45001 standard follows the basic structure of other ISO management system standards such as ISO 9001:2015 (quality) or ISO 14001:2015 (environment).

4. Context of the organization	4.1	Understanding the organization and its context
	4.2	Understanding the needs and expectations of workers and other interested parties
	4.3	Determining the scope of the OH&S management system
	4.4	OH&S management system
5. Employee management and participation	5.1	Leadership and commitment
	5.2	OH&S policy
	5.3	Organizational roles, responsibilities and authorities
	5.4	Consultation and participation of workers
6. Planning	6.1	Actions to address risks and opportunities
	6.2	OH&S objectives and planning to achieve them
7. Support	7.1	Resources
	7.2	Competence
	7.3	Awareness
	7.4	Communication
	7.5	Documented information

8. Operations	8.1 Operational planning and control
	8.2 Emergency preparedness and response
9. Evaluating performance	9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis and performance evaluation
	9.2 Internal audits
	9.3 Management review
10. Improvement	10.1 General
	10.2 Incident, nonconformity and corrective action
	10.3 Continual improvement

## 6. Conversion of the certification – significant key points

The standard takes into account other international standards such as the BS OHSAS 18001. Organizations wishing to adopt the standard should not encounter any difficulty in doing so because the requirements are consistent with those of the OHSAS 18001. There is also a changeover period for amending and integrating the requirements of other ISO management system standards into the organization's management processes at a higher level.

### 6.1 Publication of the new standard and issuing of certificates

The ISO 45001:2018 standard was published on March 12, 2018. Certificates can be issued from this publication date.

### 6.2 Transition periods for converting certified management systems

Transition period of three years from March 12, 2018. This means that, three years after ISO 45001 is published, i.e. on March 11, 2021, OHSAS 18001:2007 will be withdrawn and will no longer be valid. Before this time, all requirements must be inspected by a certification body and a corresponding audit on the implementation of the standard carried out. If local legislation/regulation requires an accredited OHSAS 18001 certification and the legislation/regulation is not amended to include ISO 45001, the validity of the accredited certification to BS OHSAS 18001 standard (or equivalent national standard) can be extended.

### 6.3 Applying for SQS certification after the new standard is published

SQS advises users to apply for their first OH & S management system certification (new customers who have not previously been certified to a similar standard) in accordance with the new ISO 45001:2018 standard.

### 6.4 Surveillance audits after the ISO 45001 publication date

Surveillance audits for OHSAS 18001:2007 can be carried out during the three-year transition period in accordance with OHSAS 18001:2007. However, the date of the last audit before the three-year transition period expires must be the date of the transition to ISO 45001.

A surveillance audit that is carried out while the existing OHSAS 18001 certificate is still valid can be changed to a shorter re-certification audit in order to transition to ISO 45001. In such cases, the duration of the audit is equal to that required for a surveillance audit plus an additional 40%.

### 6.5 Re-certification audits after the ISO 45001 publication date

After the ISO 45001 publication date, SQS will carry out re-certification audits in accordance with the new standard as far as possible. If, after the ISO 45001 publication date, a company still decides to go ahead with an OHSAS 18001:2007 re-certification audit, the expiration date of the certificate must be limited to the end of the three-year transition period.

Correctly planning and converting to the new certificate avoids the drawback of a limited certificate expiration date.

#### 6.6 Duration of conversion audits

Based on the new requirements of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA, ISO 17021-10), the duration of future audits (certification audits, surveillance audits, re-certification audits) carried out in accordance with ISO 45001:2018 must be increased in certain cases.

#### 6.7 Retaining the OHSAS 18001:2007 certificate

During the three-year transition period, the OHSAS 18001:2007 certificate can be retained while an organization is getting certified to ISO 45001:2018. Please note that this often involves additional work and expense.

### 7. Procedure of conversion of the management system

There are recommended steps to help organizations convert to the new ISO 45001 standard:

- Examine the ISO 45001:2018 standard
- Carry out a Gap analysis in accordance with ISO 45001:2018 requirements (independently or by SQS)
- Develop an implementation plan for transitioning from OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001
- Determine internal competencies for ISO 45001:2018 (e.g. SQS introductory and advanced seminars on ISO 45001)
- Ensure awareness among all parties who can influence the effectiveness of the OH & S management system
- Update the OH & S management system according to the requirements and review the effectiveness of the implemented changes
- Contact the responsible SQS customer advisor to define the transition process and re-certification

### 8. Use of SQS customer support and other options

#### Services in conjunction with the revision of the standards

In order to support its customers, SQS has developed a wide range of services to ensure efficient implementation and use of the new requirements and recommendations. SQS training services are available at [www.sqs.ch/en](http://www.sqs.ch/en).

- To begin with, we advise taking a one-day advanced seminar for organizations wishing to convert their current OH & S management system to the new ISO 45001 Standard.
- For organizations developing an OH & S management system for the first time, we recommend attending our two-day introductory seminar «Occupational health and safety management in accordance with ISO 45001.»
- For those looking to further a sustainable and solid system that promotes good health, we recommend our one-day advanced seminar «Operational health management (OHM).»
- The conversion process can be coordinated with the responsible SQS customer advisor, who is happy to share useful expertise on evaluation.
- The SQS offices are responsible for handling general inquiries and the SQS auditors can provide expert information.

### Certification of integrated management systems

SQS is a leading service provider in the field of integrated management systems – such as quality, environmental, occupational health and safety and energy management. SQS achieves this thanks to its multi-talented auditors who are able to cover several certification standards during one single audit.

If and when required, SQS will be happy to make a non-binding offer for certifications according to ISO 45001, ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 50001 or one of its other services.

In doing so, SQS supports its customers with training, assessment, certification, validation and verification services on the path to sustainable success.



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