

## **Evolution of the International Occupational Health and Safety Management System Standard, OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001**

BS OHSAS 18001 is due to be replaced by a new international standard ISO 45001 in late 2016. The projected timeline for development and introduction of the new standard is as follows:

- May 2014: release of Committee Draft
- Q4 2014: release of Draft International Standard
- 2015: release of Final Draft International Standard
- Q4 2016: release of ISO international standard 45001

The proposed differences between the existing OHSAS 18001 and new ISO 45001 standards, together with the rationale for the changes are described below:

### **1. Improved alignment with ISO 9001, 14001 and other management system standards**

The most significant change from OHSAS 18001 is that the layout of ISO 45001 will be compliant with ISO's new 'Annex SL' high level structure. This structure will be used for all ISO management system standards going forward: upcoming revisions to ISO 9001, 14001 and 27001 will adopt this structure and the latest version of ISO 22301 already complies. With an increasing number of organisations implementing integrated management systems incorporating more than one standards, inconsistencies in the structure of existing versions of the standards and in definitions of some of the important terms used has caused confusion to users

The new Annex SL high level structure will include the following concepts that are not used in existing versions of the standards:

### **2. Context of the Organisation**

This section requires the organisation to consider foreseeable internal and external risks that could impact its activities and OHS performance. Examples could include the introduction of new technologies, regulatory impacts, HR issues (e.g. availability of suitable employees and industrial relations) and adverse weather events such as flooding. ISO 45001 will require that these risks are addressed.

### **3. Leadership**

Existing and previous versions of management system standards have made references to the role of 'top management', including the requirement for them to set the policy and objectives of the system and to ensure they are communicated to the employees. Leadership requirements have not been addressed due to difficulties with defining these requirements in a way that can be incorporated into an objectively auditable standard. ISO 45001 will, however, attempt to address these requirements.

#### 4. Documented Information

Existing and previous versions of standards make reference to documentation and records: the term 'documented information' is intended cover data and information that has been processed by information technology software to make it more relevant or 'user friendly' to the organisation. The term 'preventative action' has been removed from the draft wording of ISO 45001 as a fundamental purpose of the management system is to prevent OHS incidents and there is therefore no longer a requirement for a specific clause on preventative action to be included in the standard as it is based on the 'whole' of the management system which then becomes the preventive action.

In addition to the Annex SL changes to the structure of the standard summarised above, ISO 45001 will incorporate a standardised definition of the term 'risk' to ensure that inconsistencies in the application of OHSAS 18001 based on variable interpretations of the term are removed. In addition, the definitions of 'workers' and 'workplaces' vary in different countries. For example, the workplace can be defined just as the certified organisation's premises or for a company that requires their employees to work at customer's premises, they too can be classified as the employee's workplace. ISO 45001 will address these inconsistencies.

An important change is that ISO 45001 will require organisations to consider and address OHS risks associated with outsourcing services required by the business. In the event of a significant OHS incident caused by the failure of a subcontractor to whom a service had been outsourced, the potential for reputational and financial risk to the parent organisation could be very significant. An example of this is fire and explosion on a drilling rig leased by BP in the Gulf of Mexico that resulted in the death of 11 workers and the largest marine oil spill in the world.

**To conclude:** The replacement of the OHSAS 18001 OHS management system standard with ISO 45001 will demonstrate that it has 'come of age' and the new standardised structure and definitions shared with this and other management system standards will facilitate the implementation of integrated management systems. ISO 45001 will be effective at ensuring overall business risks are addressed in addition to achieving regulatory compliance and when effectively implemented, it has the potential to save lives, reduce accidents, reduce costs and improve employee morale.

Please contact our ISOQAR technical team on 0161 865 3699 if you have any further questions.

