

Occupational Health And Safety Management Systems (ISO 18000)

This bulletin is being presented in order to update our clients as to the status of the proposed ISO 18000 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) standard and to alert you that AM Health and Safety can assist you with developing and implementing an ISO 18000 based health and safety management program.

There may be some confusion on the matter of the ISO 18000 standard which we will attempt to clear up. Let's start with its history. For decades, the focus of occupational health and safety programs has been centered on compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. During the past decade, however, the acceptance of management system standards in the quality and environmental arenas has enabled many organizations to move beyond compliance with specifications and regulatory requirements to developing management systems that foster continual improvement.

As systems for quality (ISO 9001) and environmental (ISO 14001) management were being adopted in the 90's by industries throughout the world, the demand for an international, externally verifiable OH&S management system standard began to build. As a result, numerous regulatory bodies and professional societies have written and published their own standards or specifications for OH&S management. Examples include the Voluntary Protection Program (OSHA), Responsible Care (CMA), the OHSMS Guidance Document (AIHA), BS 8800 (BSI), and the Proposed Health and Safety Program Rule (OSHA). Though each of these documents establishes a systemic approach to managing OH&S issues, none were established to be used in a third-party certification scheme.

In light of this, the International Standards Organization (ISO) met in 1997 to vote on the development of a standard, which addressed Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) entitled ISO 18000. The standard was voted down. At that time, there was little support from the main stakeholders for ISO to develop standards in this field. Some major U.S. corporations helped torpedo the idea of an ISO safety and health standard because most of them already had safety and health management systems in place. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) voted again in October of 2000 against their developing such an international standard. Though the board's vote in October 2000 was 29 in favor of such a standard and 20 against, a two-thirds majority is required to establish a new technical committee. Support continues to build within ISO for an OH&S standard, and many believe it's just a matter of time before a standard is adopted.

To fill the void, the British Standards Institute, with input from several other European standards and certification organizations, published and issued the Occupational Health & Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001 specification in 1999. OHSAS 18001:1999 is designed for use in a certification scheme. It has been well received throughout the world and many believe that it will one day be the basis for an ISO international standard for occupational health and safety. It is being aggressively marketed as a global benchmark.

In 2001 the International Labor Office released its own guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO/OSH 2001), which has created renewed interest in the US for an occupational safety and health management system standard.

This past year a group of safety and health representatives from various labor, government, management, and association organizations gathered at the request of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to form the Z10 Committee in Boca Raton, FL., for the purpose of drafting voluntary guidelines for occupational health and safety systems. It will be at least another year before the group publishes a proposed standard for public comment.

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Because the ILO standard was set up as a template for national guidelines and is intended to provide the main framework for occupational health and safety rules in some countries, ANSI Z10 committee members have agreed to use the ILO document as a reference tool. The ILO standard covers these elements:

- OSH policy
- Worker participation
- Responsibility and accountability
- Competence and training
- OSH management system documentation
- Communication
- Initial review
- System planning, development, implementation
- OSH objectives
- Hazard prevention: prevention and control measures, management of change, emergency prevention, preparedness and response, procurement, contracting
- Performance monitoring and measurement
- Investigation of worker-related injuries, ill health, disease and incidents and their impact on safety and health performance
- Audit
- Management review
- Preventive and corrective action
- Continual improvement

One ANSI committee member says the group's work is accelerating now that the philosophical debate over the need for any programmatic standard has been replaced by the need to come up with a standard U.S. companies can live with in a shrinking world. No wonder the committee's last meeting attracted representatives from heavy hitters like: Siemens, Anheuser-Busch, Caterpillar, Bristol-Myers Squibb, IBM, General Motors, Exxon Mobil, Dow, ITT, Alcoa, Deere, Conoco and Baxter Healthcare. The National Association of Manufacturers also had a seat at the table.

Unions are in on the action, too. The group is co-chaired by a United Auto Workers safety official. In addition, the AFL-CIO, United Steelworkers and United Food and Commercial Workers are also represented.

With OSHA silent on the standards front, professional groups are tracking the ANSI effort. Professional groups include the American Industrial Hygiene Association (which serves as the committee secretariat), the American Society of Safety Engineers, and organizations representing occupational physicians and nurses.

US companies with global presences are beginning to allocate resources to address implementation and refinement of their OHSMS. It will be a matter of time before they require their vendors to follow suit.

We at AM Health and Safety Inc. believe that given the current impetus of the ILO guidelines and the ANSI activities, it will be a matter of time before the ISO 18000 becomes reality.

To help companies comply with this standard, we offer a specialized service geared to help organizations comply with the elements of the ILO guidelines. Our specialized services include; an initial gap analysis, an overview of the standards, writing and revising documentation, on-site or off-site training of personnel, assistance with implementation, conducting internal audits, taking corrective action and follow up progress/continuous improvement assessments.

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Our service will help organizations integrate OHS management into their overall business management systems; it will focus on principles that are broadly applicable to organizations of all sizes and types, and use approaches to OHS management in common use in the United States.

AM Health and Safety Inc.'s ISO 18000 Compliance Service Plan

Site Visit/ Gap Analysis	Our Service Plan typically begins with a site visit to conduct a Gap Analysis, in which our consultants compares your company's current safety and health management system to the ILO's OHMS guidelines (the foundation of the ANSI and ISO 18000 standard), and identifies any nonconformities in the OHMS system and recommends how to bring them into compliance with the elements. We will also develop a prioritized implementation plan.
Overview of Standard	We will present a brief overview of the occupational safety and health management systems, the individual elements, the continuous improvement process and the implementation plan.
Document development	We will assist organizations develop needed documents for recordkeeping and program implementation and suggest electronic programs for Data management. We can also provide data management services.
Internal audit training	We will train your Management Representative to conduct internal audits and reporting on performance.
Conducting internal audits	We will assist you with your internal audits of your safety and health systems and regulatory compliance programs.
Follow up progress assessments	We will assist you in conducting follow up progress assessments to determine the status of the implementation plan.
Program maintenance	We will assist you in program maintenance practices such as conducting required IH compliance monitoring, regulatory inspections and employee and management safety and health compliance training.
Training Seminar	We offer a training seminar to both management and hourly work force on compliance with the various elements of the OSHMS standard.

For additional information on the ISO 18000 OSHMS contact:

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