



RRC Sample Study Text



NEBOSH

International General Certificate in
Occupational Health and Safety

Unit GIC1: Management of Health and Safety

Element 2

How Health and Safety Management Systems Work and What They Look Like



Learning Objectives

Once you've studied this element, you should be able to:

- 1 Identify the key components of a health and safety management system (ISO 45001 and ILO-OSH 2001).
- 2 Recognise the benefits and limitations of different types of health and safety management systems.
- 3 Recognise the key components of an effective health and safety policy.

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2.1: Key Components of Health and Safety Management Systems

IN THIS SECTION...

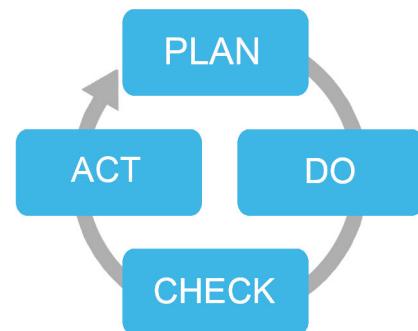
- Two widely recognised Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMSs) exist for the systematic management of health and safety, ILO-OSH 2001 and ISO 45001; both are based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act management cycle.
- The ILO-OSH 2001 OHSMS can be summarised as: Policy, Organising, Planning and Implementation, Evaluation, Action for Improvement, and Audit.
- ISO 45001 is an externally verified OHSMS standard that can be summarised as: Context of the organisation, Leadership and worker participation, Planning, Support, Operation, Performance evaluation, and Improvement.

Introduction to Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

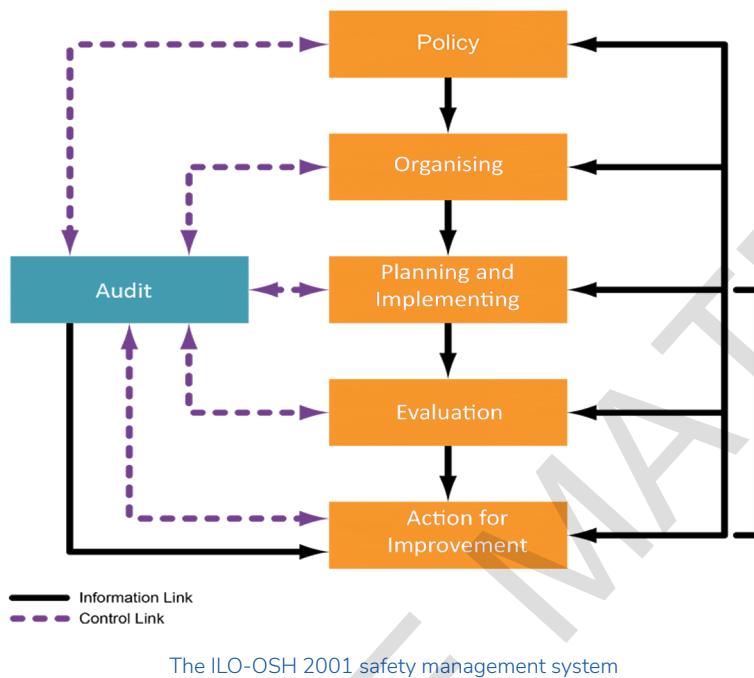
The management of workplace health and safety must be considered systematically within any organisation of a significant size, in the same way as any other form of management. A systematic approach to the management of an organisation's health and safety is referred to as an Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS). There are two common OHSMSs used by organisations internationally. These are usually identified by reference to their publication code numbers: ILO-OSH 2001 and ISO 45001. ILO-OSH 2001 is the ILO's own OHSMS published in a Guidance Note called *Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems*. ISO 45001 is the OHSMS standard published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Organisations are free to develop their own OHSMS, but working to a recognised standard can be an advantage.

Both these OHSMSs are based on what is known as the **PDCA management cycle**:

- Plan** – set your aims and objectives and then plan how to achieve them.
- Do** – put your plans into effect; implement them.
- Check** – monitor your performance towards the aims and objectives that you set yourself.
- Act** – routinely review progress and change what you are doing if it looks like you are missing your targets.



ILO-OSH 2001: The ILO Occupational Safety and Health Management System



TOPIC FOCUS

ILO-OSH 2001: The ILO Safety and Health Management System:

- **Policy** (Plan) – A clear statement has to be made to establish health and safety as a prime commitment of management at all levels of the organisation, but particularly at the top.
- **Organising** (Plan) – A framework of roles and responsibilities for health and safety must be created within the organisation, from senior management down to the front-line workers, including the appointment of specialist workers.
- **Planning and implementing** (Do) – Detailed arrangements must be made for the management of health and safety. Central to this idea is the concept of risk assessment and the identification and implementation of safe systems of work and protective measures.
- **Evaluation** (Check) – Methods must be devised to monitor and review the effectiveness of the arrangements put into place. This might be done reactively (e.g. by reviewing accident and ill-health statistics), or actively (e.g. by reviewing inspection reports).
- **Audit** (Check) – Arrangements must be made for the independent, systematic and critical examination of the OHSMS to ensure that all parts are working acceptably well.
- **Action for improvement** (Act) – Any shortcomings identified by the review process must be corrected as soon as possible by making whatever adjustments are necessary to the policy, organisation and arrangements for implementation.
- **Continual improvement** – The intention is that the OHSMS will not remain static but will develop over time to become increasingly appropriate and useful to the organisation that it exists to serve.

Note: in the outline the location of each element in the PDCA cycle has been indicated in brackets after the element title just to help.

MORE...

For more information on ILO-OSH 2001 see:

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/guidelines-occupational-safety-and-health-management-systems-ilo-osh-2001>

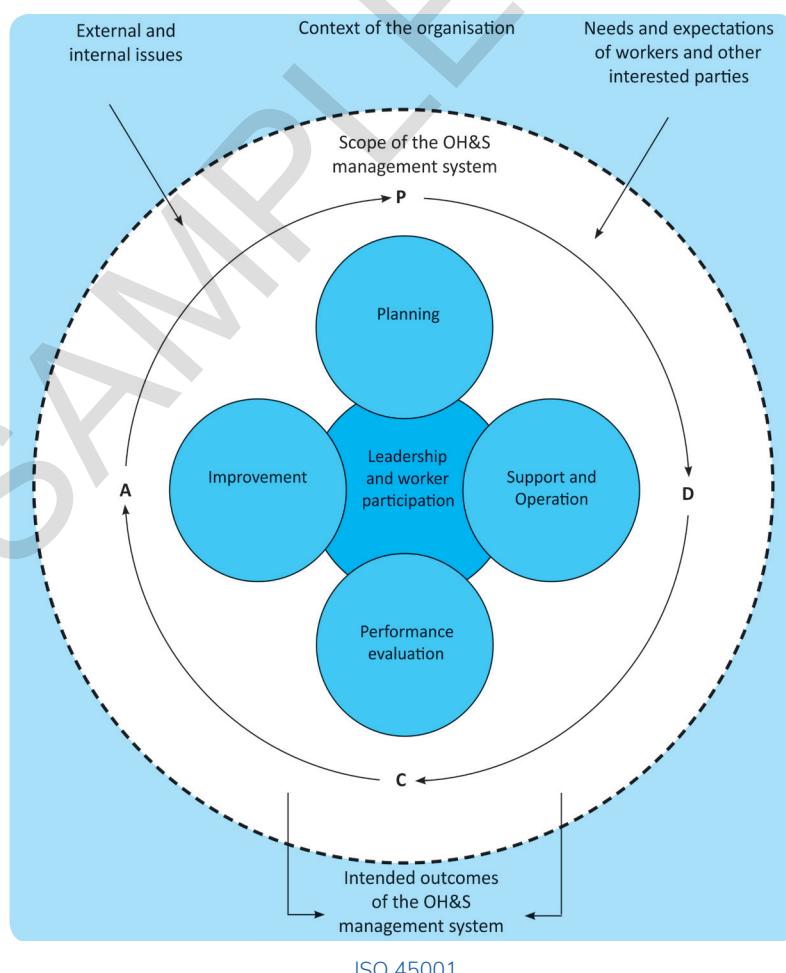
<https://www.ilo.org/publications/audit-matrix-ilo-guidelines-occupational-safety-and-health-management>

ISO 45001: The Occupational Health and Safety Management System Standard

The ISO standard **ISO 45001** provides an OHSMS standard that an organisation can be externally audited against. Successful certification to the management standard means that the organisation can demonstrate to other interested parties (such as clients) that it has a robust OHSMS that can stand up to close scrutiny. ISO 45001 is based on the PDCA management cycle and is fully compatible with other ISO management standards such as ISO 9001 (an internationally recognised quality management standard) and ISO 14001 (an internationally recognised environmental management standard).

Outline of the Standard

In the following outline, the location of each element in the PDCA cycle has been indicated in brackets after the element title just to help:



- **Context of the organisation** (management system framework) – requires that the OHSMS is designed and operated so as to be appropriate to the organisation and its operational environment. This involves understanding issues and interested parties that could influence the success of OHSMS. Referring to the figure, we can see that this forms the environment in which the management system operates, the boundaries of the system, and the system itself. This sets the scene.
- **Leadership and worker participation** (management system framework) – requires that the OHSMS is driven by those at the top of the organisation with the active engagement and participation of workers at all levels. From the figure we can see that this requirement sits at the heart of the PDCA management cycle with a very heavy emphasis on management leadership. This is because leadership is responsible for the health and safety culture of an organisation, and allocating adequate resources to make sure the management system is effective. The standard makes it clear that top management must be personally involved in driving and promoting the management system.
- **Planning** (Plan) – requires that an ongoing planning process forms a part of the OHSMS so that hazards, risks and opportunities (for improvement) are identified and that appropriate action is identified and planned. This requirement sits in the 'Plan' element of the PDCA cycle and contains many requirements which are central to most organisations' health and safety management arrangements – such as setting objectives and planning how to achieve them, and planning the risk assessment system.
- **Support** (Do) – is concerned with the provision of support for the OHSMS so that it can be established, implemented, maintained and continually improved. This involves ensuring that there are competent workers who are aware of the risks associated with their work, that there is effective communication with all workers including contractors, and that there is appropriate documentation in place to ensure work is carried out safely.
- **Operation** (Do) – requires that hazard and risk of workplace activities are operationally managed, and this also includes managing the risks associated with contractors and procurement. This ensures that changes are managed effectively and that there is an adequate response to emergency situations. The figure shows how both of these requirements form the 'Do' element of the PDCA cycle, being concerned with many of the core management activities that are central to good OHS management.
- **Performance evaluation** (Check) – requires the systematic internal monitoring and reviewing of OHS performance with a view to driving continual improvement. The figure shows how this fulfills the requirements of 'Check' in the PDCA management cycle.
- **Improvement** (Act) – embeds the principle of learning lessons and implementing the learning from those lessons into the OHSMS. The figure shows how this sits on the position of 'Act' that closes the loop of the management cycle and explicitly requires both organisational learning and ongoing enhancement of the management system. From a practical perspective, the requirement sets out many routine OHS management activities such as safety inspections to identify non-conformities and accident investigation.

The Benefits of Achieving Certification

The ISO management system standard operates in the same way as other ISO management standards, in that conformance to the standard can be verified by an external accredited organisation (such as the British Standards Institution in the UK) so that certification to the standard can be achieved. This certification can then be used by the organisation as proof of a robust OHSMS.

This may be useful for internal purposes (e.g. to demonstrate to internal interested parties that the management system exists and is functional).

For many organisations, it will be useful externally when trying to show clients, customers or the authorities that OHS management is integrated into the routine functioning of the organisation. This can give the organisation a competitive advantage when competing against other organisations for contracts or further work.

Certification is an expensive process but the costs of achieving and maintaining certification are often outweighed by the financial benefits associated with having a robust formal/certified OHSMS.



Certification is something an organisation can be proud to achieve

Benefits and Limitations of Formal/Certified Health and Safety Management Systems

Formal management systems, such as ISO 45001, are structured management systems that adhere to established standards and can be certified through external audits.

Benefits

- **Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Requirements**
 - Adopting a formal system like ISO 45001 helps organisations meet the legal requirement to “plan, organise, control, monitor, and review” health and safety arrangements, which also supports the ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (ILO-OSH 2001).
- **Clear Structure and Standardisation**
 - Provides a well-defined framework, making it easier to implement consistent safety practices across the organisation.
 - ISO 45001, for instance, follows the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, ensuring continuous improvement.
- **Enhanced Credibility and Reputation**
 - Certification to ISO 45001 demonstrates to stakeholders, customers, and regulatory bodies a commitment to high health and safety standards.
 - This can be a competitive advantage in industries where safety is a critical factor.
- **Proactive Risk Management**
 - Formal systems emphasise identifying and addressing risks before they lead to incidents, improving overall safety performance.
- **Improved Employee Morale and Engagement**
 - Clear safety policies and procedures instill confidence among employees, leading to better morale and reduced resistance to safety measures.
- **External Validation**
 - Certification often involves independent audits, providing assurance that the system is effective and compliant with international or national standards.
- **Scalability**
 - Formal systems are designed to be scalable, making them suitable for organisations of various sizes and industries.
- **Continual Improvement of Health and Safety Performance**
 - Monitoring and evaluation of health and safety performance identifies opportunities for improvement.

Limitations

- **Resource Intensity**
 - Implementing and maintaining a certified system requires significant time, effort, and financial investment, particularly for smaller organisations.
 - Costs may include training, audits, and consultant fees.
- **Complexity**
 - The detailed documentation and procedures required can be daunting, especially for organisations with limited administrative capacity.
- **Risk of Bureaucracy**
 - Over-reliance on documentation and processes may lead to a “tick-box” approach, where the focus shifts from meaningful safety improvements to merely meeting certification criteria.

- **Resistance to Change**
 - Employees and managers may perceive formal systems as overly rigid, leading to resistance during implementation.
- **Dependence on Audits**
 - Organisations may prioritise passing audits over addressing underlying safety culture issues.

Benefits and Limitations of Informal/Non-Certified Health and Safety Management Systems

Informal management systems refer to internal, often customised frameworks developed by organisations without seeking certification to recognised standards.

Benefits

- **Flexibility**
 - Informal systems can be tailored to the unique needs of the organisation, making them more adaptable and less rigid than certified systems.
- **Lower Cost**
 - Avoiding certification fees and external audits makes informal systems more cost-effective, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Ease of Implementation**
 - Without the need to meet external standards, organisations can focus on practical, straightforward measures to manage risks.
- **Encourages Innovation**
 - Informal systems allow organisations to develop creative and specific solutions that may not fit within the structure of a formal standard.
- **Focus on Practicality**
 - Emphasis is placed on implementing effective safety measures rather than meeting external documentation requirements.

Limitations

- **Lack of Recognition**
 - Informal systems may lack credibility with external stakeholders, customers, or regulators. This can be a disadvantage when competing for contracts or meeting client requirements.
- **Inconsistent Application**
 - Without a formal framework, there is a risk of inconsistency in how safety measures are applied across different parts of the organisation.
- **Vulnerability to Legal Risks**
 - While informal systems can meet regulatory requirements, the lack of structured documentation may make it harder to demonstrate compliance in the event of an inspection or incident investigation.
- **Limited External Oversight**
 - The absence of external audits may lead to complacency or missed opportunities for improvement.
- **Dependence on Key Personnel**
 - Informal systems often rely heavily on the expertise and commitment of specific individuals. If those individuals leave, the system's effectiveness may decline.