# ENSURING EMPLOYEES' HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK BY IMPLEMENTING THE ISO 45001 STANDARD

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**Abstract**

From ancient times, people have been concerned with protection at the workplace and have taken various precautions to protect themselves. As labour processes evolved, so did the risks to employees of injury, illness, and death, and the search for adequate means of protection and avoidance of accidents at work began.

To this end, several occupational safety and health management systems have been developed at international, regional and sectoral levels. These models are often well thought out, but they do not fit into all the principles of occupational safety and health, therefore the **ISO 45001 occupational health and safety management system** is considered to reflect these safety principles in the best way**.**

The occupational safety and health management system represents a set of elements with a decisional, organizational, informational, motivational character, etc. within the organization, through which all the processes and relations of the **occupational health and safety management system** are exercised, in order to obtain the desired level of safety and health at work.

**Keywords:** occupational health, occupational safety, occupational health and safety management system

## 1   INTRODUCTION

Concern for workplace protection has always existed, therefore, since ancient times, mankind has secured various ways to protect themselves. With the advent of industrialization, mankind has experienced various forms of bodily harm, as well as ways to prevent them. Thus, it was realized that the increasing complexity of the work processes led to greater risks of accidents, which could have various tragic consequences. It was also realized that accidents could be avoided and the search for appropriate means of protection began. In this regard, various occupational health and safety systems have been developed at the enterprise level.

## 2   METHODOLOGY

The paper summarizes information on the international standards OHSAS 18001 and ISO 45001, developed by the International Organization for Standardization in order to provide organizations around the world with a practical tool to assist in achieving and ensuring a safe occupational climate, avoiding all forms of risks. The content aspects were researched and the analysis of the differences between these contents was performed. The aim of the research was to identify the link between the retired occupational health and safety management system OHSAS 18001 and ISO 45001, and to identify the defining elements of the new standard.

## 3   RESULTS

Companies that want to improve employee safety, minimize workplace risks and provide better working conditions, can use and implement an occupational health and safety management system.

The occupational health and safety management system represent a set of elements with a decisional, organizational, informational, motivational character, etc. within the organization, through which all the processes and relations of management of health and safety at work are exercised, in order to obtain the desired level of safety and health at work. [1, p.401]

At the international level, we can identify several models of occupational health and safety management system, which are designed as practical tools to assist companies in achieving the goal of occupational health and safety, which have been widely used previously, as well as the international standard OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems) and the ILO-OSH Guidelines of the International Labour Organization, which formed the basis for the development of the current standard in the field of ISO 45001.

OHSAS 18001 was published in 1999 with the aim of unifying this field through a unified approach that had taken the form of a standard, in addition, it aimed to help organizations formulate policies and objectives for occupational health and safety. Throughout the life of the standard, it has enjoyed immense popularity, therefore over 160 thousand companies have implemented it.

Gradually, based on various surveys, research, analysis, there was a need to improve or redesign existing rules, as well as to prevent the daily deaths of over 7,600 people, according to statistics provided by the International Labour Organization, therefore in 2013, ISO/ PC Committee 283 presented a new proposal, which eventually led to the development of a new standard, as a replacement for OHSAS 18001. This happened in 2018, when the new ISO 45001 standard was published.

ISO 45001 is an occupational health and safety management system - A practical guide for small organizations, developed by the International Organization for Standardization as an international standard with the potential to save almost three million lives each year [2]. ISO 45001 has been approved as a replacement for the international standard OHSAS 18001, and the latter obtaining the official status of a withdrawn standard, and companies have three years to migrate to the requirements of the new standard.

ISO 45001 is a new generation standard, in terms of structure, It is developed in accordance with the requirements of Annex SL, which allows it to be compatible with ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. Annex SL is „a section of the part of the ISO/ IEC Directives 1, which sets out how the ISO standard management system (MSS) standards should be written. The purpose of the SL Annex is to enhance the coherence and alignment of the MSS, providing a unified and agreed high-level structure, identical basic text and common terms and basic definitions" [3].

ISO 45001 differs greatly from OHSAS 18001 in that it focuses on the interaction between the enterprise and its business environment, but OHSAS 18001 has focused on managing occupational health and safety hazards and other internal issues in the organization. Other differences can also be highlighted [4]:

*Table 1. Differences between ISO 45001 and OHSAS 18001 standards.*

| ISO 45001 | OHSAS 18001 |
|---|---|
| • is based on the procedural approach | • focuses on procedures |
| • takes into account both occupational health and safety risks and other risks and opportunities of the management system | • deals exclusively with occupational health and safety risks |
| • is dynamic | • is not |
| • includes taking into account the views of stakeholders | • does not |

These two standards represent differences in approach, as well as in the perception of occupational health and safety management, which will be viewed from the perspective of the company that wants to be solid and sustainable and will also be a basis for the migration process.

An innovative aspect of the new standard is its structure and provisions [5]:

*Table 2. Structure of the ISO 45001 standard.*

| Structure | Content |
|---|---|
| Foreword | Mention is made of what ISO is and how its standards were born, which are the bodies that participate in their elaboration and approval. It is also mentioned that this document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO / IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives). |
| Introduction | Stresses the importance of any organization's concerns for its employees regarding occupational safety and health, and the importance of implementing an occupational health and safety management system. |
| Requirement/ Clause 1 | Scope. The purpose of the standard is mentioned, which is a specific document with requirements for an occupational health and safety management system and provides guidance for its use, to enable organizations to provide safe and healthy jobs by preventing injuries and health caused by work. |
| Requirement/ Clause 2 | Normative references. There are no normative references in this document. |
| Requirement/ Clause 3 | Terms and definitions. It presents the terms and definitions used in the standard, as well as notes to clarify the meaning of some terms and definitions. |
| Requirement/ Clause 4 | Context of the organization. It aims to establish the context of the company at the time (external and internal issues that could directly influence the results), identify the needs and expectations of employees, and all stakeholders, determine the purpose of the occupational health and safety management system and implement processes needed to support him. |
| Requirement/ Clause 5 | Leadership and worker participation. Addresses the leadership requirements related to the occupational health and safety management system, as well as the way in which the involvement of employees in the development and implementation is ensured. It also contains requirements for the development of occupational health and safety policy, the assignment of roles and responsibilities to all actors involved. The standard requires the company to |

| | |
|---|---|
| | make extensive use of the processes of consultation and active participation of employees. |
| Requirement/ Clause 6 | Planning. It sets out the requirements assigned to the occupational health and safety management system planning process, including the establishment and assessment of occupational health and safety risks and opportunities, as well as the actions to be taken to prevent them. It also provides for the establishment of hazards, the establishment of legal requirements and other commitments undertaken by the company, as well as the identification of targets for improvement. |
| Requirement/ Clause 7 | Support. It refers to the requirements regarding the necessary support for the assurance, the functioning of the occupational health and safety management system, as well as the necessary resources, the establishment of the requirements regarding the communication process, the requirements for the information used and the necessary competencies. |
| Requirement/ Clause 8 | Operation. A clause addressing the requirements assigned to the planning and operational control process necessary for the occupational health and safety management system, how to eliminate hazards and reduce occupational health and safety risks, change management, and control over the procurement process. |
| Requirement/ Clause 9 | Performance evaluation. It contains guidance on how the company should evaluate the performance of the occupational health and safety management system, monitor, measure and analyze the results obtained, and interpret the data following internal audits. |
| Requirement/ Clause 10 | Improvement. Clause for continuous improvement of the occupational health and safety management system, guidance on how to handle incidents, detected non-compliances and how to take corrective action |
| Annex | |

An important aspect in the case of the implementation of the ISO 45001 standard is the "risk-based thinking" which represents the way of taking into account both qualitative and quantitative risks, when planning and controlling the management system, with its component parts.

> By considering risk across all management systems and management processes and its processes, the likelihood of meeting the proposed objectives is improved, performance is more consistent and customers can be confident that they will receive the desired product or service.

> Risk-based thinking:

> ❖ improves leadership;
> ❖ establishes a proactive culture of improvement;
> ❖ helps to comply with the legislation;
> ❖ ensures the achievement of the quality of products and services;
> ❖ Improves customer confidence and satisfaction [6].

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The new ISO 45001 standard offers companies the opportunity to implement a system of management of health and safety at work, which will meet best the health and safety needs at work of employees and employers. It is a model that will offer the possibility of maximum

involvement of all actors in the company. Implementing this standard will provide some benefits to companies:

- ✓ It will increase organizational resilience through proactive risk prevention, innovation and continuous improvement;
- ✓ It will strengthen legal and regulatory compliance while reducing business losses;
- ✓ It demonstrates brand responsibility by committing to safe, healthy and sustainable work;
- ✓ It will ensure a comprehensive occupational health and safety system for all businesses, of all sizes.

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