

ISO 14001:2015 UPDATE: FDIS 14001 ISSUED

Discover the latest stage in the ISO 14001:2015 revision process.

The latest milestone in the ISO 14001 revision process was reached on July 2, 2015 with the issue of ISO/FDIS 14001. This document is the final draft before the publication of the standard (scheduled for September 2015).

The convention at ISO is that only editorial changes to the text are permitted between the issue of the FDIS and final publication of the standard, therefore we can be reasonably sure that FDIS 14001 contains the requirements of the revised version of ISO 14001.

Structure and terminology

The FDIS 14001 adopts the High Level Structure specified in ISO Annex SL, which is now the required framework for all new and revised Management System Standards. The ISO team responsible for the revision process (subcommittee ISO/TC 207/SC1) has identified the following emerging changes as a result of their revision:

Strategic Environmental Management

There is a new requirement to comprehend the context of the organization determining external and internal issues pertinent to the organization and the environment, with actions to address them within the Environmental Management System (EMS).

Leadership

A new clause has been added with particular responsibilities for Top Management to express their leadership and commitment to environmental management. Top Management may assign this responsibility to others but retain accountability.

Protecting the environment

Environmental Policy shall incorporate a commitment to the 'protection of the environment'. There is no definition about 'protection' that includes 'prevention of pollution' and 'other' commitments, such as sustainable resource use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, etc.

Environmental performance

The key focus is on improving performance related to the management of environmental aspects. The organization shall decide on criteria to evaluate its environmental performance, using correct indicators.

Lifecycle thinking

Organizations will need to extend its control and influence to the environmental impacts from raw material acquisition/generation to end-of-life treatment. This does not imply a requirement to do a life cycle

assessment (LCA), just thinking carefully about the stages of product/service that can be controlled or influenced.

Communication

Emphasis on internal and external communication, and equal treatment of both has been added. The decision to communicate externally is retained by the organization whilst taking into account its compliance obligations.

Documentation

The term 'documented information', is used instead of 'documents' and 'records'. The organization has the flexibility to conclude when 'procedures' are required. Any format (paper, cloud, etc.) would be valid.

ISO 14001: 2004 transition

Organizations which are already certified to ISO 14001:2004 will have three years from formal publication of ISO 14001:2015 in which to transfer to the new version of this standard. Based on the current publication schedule, this transition period would end on September 2018.

Further information and updates on the development of ISO 14001:2015 and its publication schedule will be issued by SGS as they become available.

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