



ISO 14001

The Environmental Management Business System

What is an Environmental Management System?

An Environmental Management system (EMS) is a framework that allows an organization to consistently control and maintain its impact on the environment and continually improve its business operations. The ISO 14000 series of environmental system standards, sometimes referred to as the "green" standards, establishes specific requirements for developing comprehensive environmental management systems. Formalized by the International Organization for Standardization in September 1996, the standard was developed to give organizations a structured framework with which to formulate policies and objectives for environmental management systems (EMS) while simultaneously considering legislative requirements, relevant public issues and plant-specific environmental concerns.

Benefits of an EMS

Companies considering the ISO 14001 registration process first must understand the benefits of becoming certified to the worldwide standard. Registration increases the visibility and credibility of a company's environmental management processes, especially in the eyes of environmental regulators. The benefits of an ISO 14001 registered environmental management system are far-reaching, they include:

- ❑ Leadership in environmental improvement
- ❑ Efficient management of raw materials and waste products
- ❑ Regulatory requirements and risk assessment
- ❑ Customer satisfaction and cost controls
- ❑ Enhances companies relationship with shareholders, customers, investors, banks, and insurance companies
- ❑ Validates your environmental commitment to the community
- ❑ Increased opportunities for global business
- ❑ Reduced governmental compliance inspections



Developing an EMS

The ISO 14001 Standard specifies the following necessary components of an EMS:

- Defining an environmental policy
- Identifying legal obligations and environmental aspects
- Creating environmental planning objectives
- Establishing an environmental management program
- Specifying how to achieve objectives
- Implementing the EMS and operational controls
- Assessing conformity with the requirements of the standard and taking corrective actions in cases of non-conformity
- Conducting internal EMS audits, and
- Conducting a management review of the EMS.

Companies beginning the ISO 14001 registration process do not necessarily need to start from scratch, because many probably already have useful resources in their databases. Examples of existing resources that companies often overlook when developing an EMS include Occupational Safety and Health Act lists of chemicals used in the facility; hazardous operations reports; chemical substances inventories; process safety management documents,

When a company seeks registration it is ready to map out a strategic approach to achieving registration. The approach will depend on whether more than one site is involved, whether the company will seek multi-site registration or individual registration for each facility, and to what degree it plans to integrate the EMS with its safety, health, and quality systems. The company should then draft a clear policy, including a commitment to continual environmental improvement; assess its most significant environmental aspects; develop objectives (broad goals to reduce environmental impacts) and targets (measurable, quantifiable statements about how to achieve objectives) to address the aspects; and establish programs and procedures to meet the goals.

Companies also should consider sending employees to training courses about management systems and the ISO 14001 standard. EMS consultants can be helpful during this training phase and during implementation phases and improvement.



An overview of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Audits for ISO 14001

Phase 1 - Technical Review and evaluation of management system documents
The Technical Review is a required visit to the client's facility during which the following information is reviewed and evaluated:

1. Environmental policy
2. Organization's determination of aspects and impacts
3. An overview of regulations and permits
4. The EMS System's documentation (manual & procedures)
5. The scope of the EMS
6. Confirmation or modification of time requirements
7. Identification of any necessary technical expertise
8. This review must be conducted on-site. Without this visit a registration cannot be issued. This visit must be between six weeks and 6 months before the registration audit.

Phase 2 - The Registration Audit includes a formal review of the Environmental Management System's effectiveness against ISO 14001 and their internal procedures. This visit is to ensure that objective evidence exists to demonstrate that requirements have been met.

Upon completion of a registrar audit, the company is notified of the outcome of the audit. During the closing meeting the client is presented an audit report that describes the audit results and includes any deviations that may have been found. A registration audit ending in no deviations or only minor deviations will in most cases receive a recommendation for registration by an audit team.

If you would like more information or assistance regarding an ISO 14001 EMS, please contact us.

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