

ISO 14001:2015 Transition

What you need to know, and how your company can prepare.



Originally published as BS 7750 in 1992 and as ISO 14001 in 1996, ISO 14001 was the world's first international environmental standard. Today, it remains one of ISO's most widely used standards; over its 24-year history, it has served more than 300,000 organizations around the world, guiding them in improving their environmental, sustainability and operational performance.

ISO 14001:2015, published in September 2015, is the newest version of the standard. It has been updated to provide organizations the most current and relevant requirements for improved performance and business benefits. There is also an increased focus on improving environmental performance.

Organizations that are currently registered to the previous version, ISO 14001:2004, will have until September 2018 to transition to the 2015 standard.

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about the update and the transition process, to help you as you begin to explore the standard changes.

- **Why was ISO 14001 revised?**

All ISO standards are reviewed every five years to determine if a revision is required in order to keep it current and relevant for the marketplace. ISO 14001:2015 is designed to respond to latest trends and ensure it is compatible with other management system standards.

- **I am ISO 14001:2004 certified. How do I begin the transition?**

1. *Obtain a copy of the standard.*
2. *Consider taking training so you and your colleagues can become aware of new and significantly changed areas within the standard.*
3. *Begin thinking about a transition plan and timings for when and how you will revise your management system.*

- **How can I obtain a copy of the new standard?**

A copy of the ISO 14001:2015 can be purchased now from ASQ.

- **What are the revised areas in the ISO 14001:2015 standard?**

The standard has been updated to respond to latest trends in environmental management. It also includes additional requirements for:

- *Increased emphasis on environmental management within an organization's strategic and business planning*
- *Leadership*
- *Risk associated with threats and opportunities*
- *Life-cycle thinking*
- *Value chain controls*
- *Performance evaluation*

The standard has also adopted a new structure, referred to as "Annex SL" which ensures that the standard is compatible with other ISO management system standards.

- **I am a small business with less than 50 employees. Is ISO 14001:2015 relevant for me?**

The revised version of the standard is as relevant to small businesses as it is to large multinational organizations. Regardless of your organization's size, it will enable you to drive improvement in your environmental performance, saving natural and financial resources.

- **How soon can I start the transition process?**

You can begin making changes to address the new requirements immediately. Just remember that your system must remain compliant with the current requirements of ISO 14001:2004 until your transition has been completed.

- **How much time do we have to transition from the 2004 version to the 2015 standard?**

Organizations have three years to transition from the 2004 version to the 2015 standard; however, some registrars may require it sooner. It is advisable to check with your registrar to confirm transition dates.

- **How long will ISO 14001:2004 continue to be audited to?**

The current standard will be recognized and can be audited to until the end of the three year transition period for ISO 14001:2015 (15th September 2018). All organizations must transition to the new standard by the transition deadline as ISO 14001:2004 certificates will no longer be valid after that date.

- **We are currently developing our EMS to meet ISO 14001, what should our organization do?**

Write your EMS manual to meet the 2015 version. Although it may be a little more difficult, you won't have to spend valuable time transitioning at a later date.

- **I have an integrated system certified to ISO 9001 and OHSAS 18001. How will the changes to ISO 14001 affect my system?**

The introduction of Annex SL will support the integration process for ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 (the new international standard for occupational health and safety management systems – expected in October 2016). You will need to be thoughtful about transition dates and plans because of the different publication dates.

Next Steps

Review the standard: Review the changes to understand their core impact and how they will affect your organization. Ensure that key internal staff understand the differences that the changes will bring to the design, operation and performance of your EMS and any other management system standards in your organization.

Talk to IES: We are well equipped to deal with any questions you may have relating to the standard changes. Please give us a call.

Begin formalizing a transition plan: Create a transition plan and process; ensure top management is involved from the start.

How IES Can Help

IES offers either on-site or classroom training, depending on the needs of your organization. Here are some of the training opportunities that can help your company make a smooth transition:

ISO 14001 Overview Training (1 day)

ISO 14001 - Internal Auditor Training (1 or 2 day)

ISO 14001 Gap Analysis Pre-Assessment or Internal Audit

ISO 14001 required Regulatory Compliance Evaluation (1 or 2 day)

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