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New International Health and Safety Management Standard (ISO 45001):

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

Introduction:

The International Standardisation Organisation (ISO) has approved the world's first occupational health and safety standard and new certifiable standard for occupational health and safety (ISO45001). The standard was first published this week. This will replace the non-certifiable British Standard OHSAS 18001 which was introduced in 1999. BS OHSAS 18001 will be withdrawn.

The standard is now likely to be used in workplaces across the UK, although it will take some time before it is properly implemented in a way that will allow organisations to get properly certified. It is likely to be most commonly used in multi-national corporations that will seek to have a standard OHS system across the entire globe. It may also become a requirement in many procurement and infrastructure contracts.

Background:

The ISO's attempts to develop what is now ISO45001 were initially met with strong opposition from international employers and Trade Union bodies, on the basis that this was a matter that should be dealt with through social dialogue. In addition, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which has its own guidelines on OSH management systems (ILO 2001), refused to support it; they believed that health and safety standards should be developed by governments, unions and employers through the ILO process, which gives an equal voice to each of these groups to ensure that the views of the social partners are closely reflected in labour standards. Unions agreed and believed that ILO-OSH 2001 guidelines should be the starting point for this, although there was a need for some updating and strengthening of the current document. The ILO agreed to proceed with an elaboration of its own standard, but this did not happen; hence the ISO tried again and succeeded in co-opting the ILO into the process in 2013 when the two organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of ISO 45001 (ILO 2013), on the basis of a number of assurances that the ISO standard would be consistent with the ILO guidelines. In October 2013 a project committee met in London to create the first working draft of ISO 45001. Around 50 national standards bodies (NSBs) were involved in the first meeting, along with the ILO, the ITUC and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE). Further meetings were held in Casablanca, Dublin and Geneva.

ISO 45001 and Legal Compliance:

Achieving ISO45001 accreditation will not, in itself, be sufficient to meet all the requirements of British Health and Safety law, and it differs in several ways from the HSE health and safety management system HSG65, so employers cannot rely on simply having met the requirements of ISO45001 to be confident of having a safe and healthy workplace which is legally compliant.

Main Differences between ISO 45001 and BS OHSAS 18001:

- Context.
- A lot more on leadership.
- A lot more on Worker Participation and TU/Safety Rep Involvement. Much more focus and improvement in this area.
- Documentation is much simpler

Process:

- Employers have to meet requirements for:
- Risk Management.
- Provision of resources.
- Performance measurements.
- Analysis.
- Continual improvements.
- Once processes are in place, the employer can seek 'Certification'.
- Then a Stage 1 Audit is carried out.
- A Stage 2 is then carried out following any remedial action and once completed satisfactorily, Certification can follow.

What ISO 45001 says that is most positive:

- The focus is on top management/board buy in.
- There is a high level of Worker Involvement in it.
- It is strong on the 'Hierarchy Of Controls' in risk management, mirroring EU Legislation.
- Integrates Safety and Health.
- The emphasis of the wording is based on changing the workplace not the worker, improving on BS18001.
- Better than HSG65 in some areas (but lower than UK Law in some areas).
- Worker involvement is greatly improved (but lower than the SRSC Regs).
- No requirement for Free PPE or Free Training mentioned.

Some Concerns:

- Focuses heavily on processes and documentation rather than focusing on outcomes.
- It's a tool to make money for those companies and organisations advertising to get companies through Certification.

Summary Conclusions:

- It replaces BS OHSAS 18001.
- The UK still has HSG65 (which was revised with heavy Trade Union involvement).
- ISO 45001 doesn't mean anything in Law – complying with ISO 45001 doesn't mean a company is complying with Health and Safety Law.
- ISO 45001 could well be used as a standard for companies seeking contracts in various sectors but particularly construction.
- Importantly, companies and organisations will not get the ISO 45001 Certification without demonstrable Trade Union involvement.
- Costs £100 a copy.
- Certification has to be renewed every 3 years.

Attachments:

Further more detailed information can be found in the excellent attachments which are:-

1. ETUI Policy Brief.
2. ISO 45001 TUC Guide.

3. ISO 45001 Introduction & Checklist by the TUC.

Note: ISO 45001 is an improvement over its predecessor and is generally good and having a health and safety management system is important but it must not be about pointless paperwork. What makes a workplace safer is removing hazards, controlling risks and ensuring good worker involvement.

Yours sincerely



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