



# Industry Best Practice on Health & Safety at Work



**Health and safety is a leadership issue. In an effort to provide meaningful best practice to leaders in industry, government, labor and institutions of higher learning, ICSCA (Industry Cooperation on Standards and Conformity Assessment) has developed a summary of industry best practices. Industry Best Practice on Health & Safety at Work is a three-page executive summary designed specifically for CEO's and other top leaders. The document outlines the essential elements necessary for an effective management of occupational health and safety. More detail is available from numerous global resources.**

**Compliance with the best practice in this document does not give immunity from legal obligations.**

## **Introduction**

This document is directed to CEOs of any organization and provides guidance for the formulation of their Policy Statement on the arrangements for the management of occupational health and safety. It provides a concise and efficient approach, which builds on existing management processes and procedures and is practiced throughout industry on a global basis. It does not encourage or advocate third-party certification as this neither ensures a safe and healthy workplace nor does the third party certificate exonerate legal liabilities.

Protecting workplace health and safety is a fundamental duty for all organizations and their employees. This shared goal is best achieved if organizations implement a structured approach to the identification of hazards and evaluation and control of work related risks. The most effective approach is where organizations attach the same importance to achieving high standards of occupational health and safety (OH&S) management as they do to other key aspects of their business activities. Many features of effective OH&S management are indistinguishable from those practices used to achieve quality and business excellence. Their incorporation in the overall management system is fundamental in order to:

- Minimize risk to employees and others;
- Improve business performance;
- Assist organizations to establish a responsible image within the market place.

This approach to the management of occupational health and safety is not new; organizations have been successfully protecting worker health and safety using management techniques for decades. The approach enables organizations to systematically:

- identify potential or actual job hazards;
- establish measurable objectives to eliminate or reduce those hazards and control any residual risks;
- implement programs and procedures to achieve these objectives; and
- measure and check to verify performance, the effectiveness of the arrangements and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

This document provides guidance on an approach to the management of occupational health and safety. The best practice is flexible so that organizations can integrate the approach within their other business and management systems. Each organization should develop the detail of its own structured approach to suit its needs. This best practice is intended for use by any organization (including contractors), public or private, regardless of size and the nature of their activities, in any sector anywhere in the world. This should be thought of as an “umbrella” document that allows standards, laws, regulations, codes and other applicable guidance to be easily incorporated into the elements of industry best practice.

This best practice does not presume that organizations have third-party certified management systems (e.g., ISO 9001 or 14001).

## **Elements of the approach**

### **Demonstrated Top Management Commitment and Leadership**

**Leadership.** Active, visible, direct and consistent top-level management commitment and leadership is crucial to successful management of occupational health and safety. Top management’s role includes establishing policy, approving objectives, providing resources, and regularly reviewing performance. Management review to regularly evaluate health and safety performance, the adequacy and effectiveness of the arrangements for the management of OH&S and identify opportunities for improvement is particularly important. Top management is directly responsible for providing a safe workplace and promoting a safety culture.

**Policy.** Top management should establish a policy that includes commitments to prevent and reduce workplace-related injuries and ill health, comply with legal requirements, recognize OH&S as an integral part of its

business performance and continually improve performance. This policy should be communicated to all employees and be implemented through appropriate arrangements.

Responsibility, Authority and Accountability. Responsibilities, authorities, and accountabilities for implementing arrangements for the management of health and safety should be clearly identified, documented and communicated throughout the organization. Though health and safety functions can (and should) be delegated, top management is ultimately accountable for OH&S. Employees responsibility for their own safety and that of others with whom they work should be established, in the context of arrangements that provide them with the resources, tools, training, ability and opportunities to work safely.

Communication and Consultation. The organization should make effective arrangements for communicating between all levels and functions on health and safety at work issues as well as for employee involvement and consultation where appropriate. Employees should have an appropriate role in the design and implementation of health and safety programs.

## **Planning**

Conduct Hazard and Risk Assessment. The organization should implement a risk assessment procedure for identifying workplace and process hazards that pose potential or actual risks of injury or ill health. Hazards and risks should be prioritized so that they can be managed and controlled in a planned manner. The assessment should include risks to visitors or the public, emergencies and the impact of work by contractors, though contractors remain ultimately responsible for the safety of their own employees. Arrangements should also be made to provide specialist advice and services relevant to the nature of the organizations activities

Hazard Control During Design. The first goal in controlling hazards/risks identified by the assessments should be elimination of the hazards/risks by design. Application of the hierarchy of controls during design will lead to reduced risk in the workplace. The goal is to avoid bringing hazards into the workplace by defining requirements and working with suppliers. Training, warnings and personal protective equipment are the last option and are used to control residual risk.

Identify Legal and Other Requirements. The organization should make effective arrangements to ensure the identification and application of up to date legal, contractual and other requirements applicable to health and safety at work. These requirements should be translated into practical instructions so that affected personnel can assess the implications for compliance.

Establish Measurable Objectives. The organization should establish measurable OH&S objectives to control, reduce and, where practicable, eliminate workplace hazards and risks. Key performance indicators should be identified and monitored for each objective. The objectives should implement the organization's policy commitments (i.e., to prevent, comply and improve), be feasible and consider other business objectives.

## **Implementation**

Health and Safety Programs. The organization should develop and implement programs describing how, when and by whom the objectives will be achieved. These should include appropriate programs to control and, where practical, eliminate, risk in the workplace. Proactive leadership will promote a strong health and safety culture and safe behavior on the job.

Manage Change. The organization should take OH&S into account when designing or changing processes and organizations, using new materials, tools or equipment, or making other changes. Changes should be designed and implemented to reduce or eliminate existing hazards and prevent new hazards from entering the workplace.

Contractor Programs. The organization should assess contractors with respect to their health and safety competence, training and performance. Where appropriate, arrangements to address multi-employer workplaces should be agreed. Implementing these arrangements should not change the legal relationship between the organization and its contractors. Contractors should themselves consider designing and implementing arrangements consistent with this best practice to address the health and safety of their employees and those around them at the work site.

Procurement. Health and safety requirements should be integrated with existing procurement procedures in order to control the introduction of hazards into the workplace. These requirements should be included in procurement agreements for machines, equipment, facilities, and contractors.

**Emergency Response.** The organization should implement procedures to identify and respond to emergencies. These procedures should be periodically tested and/or evaluated to verify effectiveness.

**Work Instructions.** The organization should identify the workplace hazards associated with its operations, activities or services. It should implement measures to control those activities identified in the hazard and risk assessment to achieve the organization's objectives and prevent injuries and ill health. It is preferable that these measures are incorporated into other working procedures/instructions (e.g., production, quality, environmental).

**Competence.** All employees must be competent, trained and equipped to carry out their responsibilities and implement the policies and procedures that are relevant to their work related health and safety. A minimum training requirement is that required by law. All employees should have proper induction into their work environment and regularly be made aware of the hazards associated with their activity. They should be given instructions, especially before work commences, on how to perform their jobs safely and legally, prevent and avoid accidents, and respond to emergencies. Employees, in this context, include all levels, supervisors and managers.

### **Checking & Continuous Improvement**

**Monitoring and Measurement.** The organization should make effective arrangements to regularly measure the occupational health and safety performance against objectives. The organization should also verify at regular intervals that the arrangements established for the management of OH&S are implemented and effective.

**Evaluating Compliance.** The organization should make effective arrangements to regularly evaluate compliance with OH&S legal requirements.

**Checking the arrangements.** The organization should periodically check the overall management system to verify that the necessary arrangements for OH&S management are in place and are actually being implemented as planned.

**Corrective and Preventive Action.** When non-conformities are discovered (through any means, including monitoring, measuring or checking), appropriate corrective measures must be taken to mitigate the consequences of the non-conformities and decrease the likelihood of their recurrence. Where appropriate, analyses should be conducted to determine the cause of the non-conformity.

**Continuous Improvement.** Provisions shall be made for continuously improving the OH&S arrangements based on lessons learned, benchmarking and new technology. Investigation of injury, illness and near-miss situations by competent responsible people should drive future risk reduction and serves as the foundation for continuous improvement in health and safety.

### **Management Review**

**Management Review.** Top management should regularly review the OH&S performance to verify that the overall system is adequate, performing according to expectations, and identifies opportunities for improvement. This review should include results of monitoring and measurement, checking, the status of corrective action, and relevant future operational, legal or other changes that may be relevant to the OH&S performance. The management review also enables top management to communicate to middle management and supervisors their personal commitment to occupational health and safety.

**Documentation and Records.** The arrangements necessary for the effective implementation of OH&S management should be documented (by any reasonable means, including electronic, paper, placards). These documents should be controlled to ensure that the correct, authorized and current issues are available at the relevant points of use when required. Documented procedures are not always necessary for effective implementation. However, some documented procedures may be required by law.

**Record Retention.** The organization should create and maintain records necessary to demonstrate that the arrangements for the management of occupational health and safety have been implemented (including documenting performance). Some records may have to be generated and maintained for legal purposes.