

What is OHSAS 18001?

There has been a growing demand for a system based occupational health & safety (OH&S) standard that allows management to identify and control health and safety risks at workplace, reduce the potential for accidents, assure legislative compliance, and improve overall safety performance. Due to the lack of progress in developing an international OH&S standard through the ISO standard-setting process, BSI published OHSAS 18000 to serve as a model for an OH&S management system by embracing a number of standards and specification documents to address OH&S rather than product and services safety.

OHSAS 18000 gives requirements for a management system that enable organisations to control their OH&S risks and improve their performance but OHSAS 18000 does not state specific performance criteria, nor does it give detailed specifications for the design of a management system.

OHSAS 18000 comprises two main parts:

- *OHSAS 18001: Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – Specification* sets out requirements for establishing and implementing an OH&S management system. Although it is not an ISO standard, OHSAS 18001 has been developed to be compatible with the ISO 9001 (Quality) and ISO 14001 (Environmental) management systems standards, to facilitate the integration of quality, environmental and OH&S management systems by organizations, should they wish to do so.
- *OHSAS 18002: Guidelines for the Implementation of OHSAS 18001* explains the underlying principles of OHSAS 18001. It describes the intent, typical inputs, processes and typical outputs, against each requirement of OHSAS 18001. OHSAS 18002 does not create additional requirements to those specified in OHSAS 18001 nor does it prescribe mandatory approaches to the implementation of OHSAS 18001.

As the OHSAS 18001 is developed to allow third-party certification, a third document, *OHSAS 18003: Criteria for auditors of OH&S Management Systems* has also been developed to support the auditing aspect of the standard.

=====

The Safety Corner is contributed by Ir Dr. Vincent Ho, who can be contacted at vsho.hkarms@gmail.com