

ISO 14001

A Primer

The ACME Environmental Management Team

WHAT IS AN 'ISO'?

- ◎ An ISO is a series of wide ranging business standards promulgated by the Non-Governmental agency the 'International Organization for Standardization'
- ◎ ISO standards cover a whole variety of industries and business. They are designed to facilitate international business by introducing some uniformity.

Example ISOs: Both Technical and Mundane

- ◎ ISO 8691 set standards on how Petroleum companies should determine low levels of vanadium in fuel by “flameless atomic absorption spectrometry after ashing.”
- ◎ ISO 17202 sets standards on how twists should be made on single spun yarns.

ISO 14000 Family

- ◎ ISO 14000 family (including ISO 14001) deals with environmental management standards, and is designed to help institutions:
 - “Minimize harmful effects to environment”
 - “Achieve continual improvement of environmental performance”

ISO 14001: “Plan for Planning”

- ◎ **IS NOT** a set of minimum standards that define an environmentally friendly company.
- ◎ **DOES NOT** detail how to implement environmentally chemical production processes.
- ◎ **IS** a set of standards that help build an environmental management policy.

ISO 14001 continued

◎ ISO 14001:2004

“...does not specify levels of environmental performance. If it specified levels of environmental performance, they would have to be specific to each business activity and this would require a specific EMS standard for each business. That is not the intention.”

- From the International Organization for Standardization website

ISO 1400 Series: Strategy Framework

- ◎ **PLAN:** the processes and objectives
- ◎ **DO:** implement the plan
- ◎ **CHECK:** for results
- ◎ **ACT:** to improve performance

ISO 14001 specifically...

- Establishes a common reference or “language” of environmental management between businesses and customers.
- Provides general guidelines and requirements for an Environmental Management System (EMS) tailored specifically for our organization.

Outline of one section of guidelines within ISO 14001

- ◎ “Implementation” guidelines are broken into these sub-sections guidelines:
 - Structure and Areas of Responsibility
 - Training
 - Communication
 - Environmental Management System Documentation
 - Emergency Preparedness and Response
 - Etc...

Two Example of ISO 14001 Checklist Questions

- How does your training program require that all personnel whose work may create a significant impact upon the environment, have received appropriate training?
- Where has your organization established documented procedures to monitor and measure on a regular basis the key characteristics of its operations and activities that can have a significant impact on the environment?

CONS

- ⦿ “Dry and Crunchy” – a hard sell from a public relations perspective: difficult to understand, obscure. (EX: Compare with a theoretical Greenpeace award.)
- ⦿ ISO materials and guidelines require purchase. Approximately 125,815 USD plus consulting and verification fees.

PROS

- ◉ Reduced liability for environmental accidents.
- ◉ Prevention: Reduced probability of environmental accidents.
- ◉ Employee morale, management guidelines.
- ◉ Facilitates integration/communication to international community with ISO 14001
- ◉ Assurances to public, government providing “good will”.

CONCLUSION

◎ Recommend use immediately:

- to have existence of environmental management system and efforts to improve aforementioned serve as “good faith” that reduce legal liability for ACME.
- Prevention is the best medicine: ISO 14001 will most likely reduce the probability of harmful and expensive environmental accidents.
- Total savings from both alone will offset purchase costs, implementation costs, and lost productivity due to employee training.
- Implementation combined with publicity may undercut market share from larger competitors without similar ISO 14001 standards or policy.
- Can be spinned: Recommend renaming or “re-branding” for press releases. (Ex. “ACME Green Step Initiative”)