

*Insight* aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Work Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

## A well-timed addition ...

An Australian Bureau of Statistics national survey conducted in June this year into the household impact of Covid-19 reveals that one in five Australians are reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress linked to the Covid 19 pandemic. This was more predominant in Victoria with the timing of the survey coinciding with the Victorian outbreak.

The current focus on mental health & wellbeing is certainly at a heightened level, and the timeliness of the release of **ISO 45003 International Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace** is highly beneficial. With the full extent of the pandemic's impact on mental health and wellbeing still to be understood, ISO 45003 utilises a familiar ISO framework to provide clear support and advice for businesses and other organisations for managing psychosocial risk from within an OHSMS framework.

ISO 45003 provides guidance on the management of psychosocial risk, with the introductory sections stating that it "...is intended to be used together with ISO 45001", linking to ISO 45001's aim to promote and protect worker's physical and mental health. The new Standard includes details on how to recognise psychosocial hazards and offers examples of effective actions that can be taken to manage these.

It takes a more human-centered approach to determining what should be considered as a health and safety risk, identifying the conditions, circumstances and workplace demands that could potentially impair psychological health and wellbeing, and how to improve the working environment. The Standard provides guidance in relation to the early identification and assessment of risk factors such as those relating to how the work is organised (considering roles and expectations, job autonomy, job demands, workload & scheduling, and remote & isolated work) and the social factors within an organisation (such as leadership & supervision, organisational / workplace culture, interpersonal relationships, recognition, work/life balance and bullying & harassment).



Organisations that take an ISO compliance or alignment approach to their Management Systems may wish to consult ISO 45003 and incorporate its requirements and guidance with respect to managing psychological health and safety risks as part of a broader OHSMS. We consider that whilst mental health and wellbeing is of the utmost importance, long-term management of this aspect of safety needs to be within a structured framework of continual improvement to be effective.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.

## Context, Context, Context

One of the major points of difference introduced with ISO 45001 is the requirement to explore the 'Context of the organisation' (sections 4.1 – 4.4). While this is a standard clause across the suite of ISO Management System Standards, the discussion of 'context' is a new addition to the WHS space, since it is rather minimal within AS 4801.

The requirements from the ISO Standard have the first 3 elements within Section 4 exploring different components of context and are then consolidated within the section 4.4 - OHS Management System.

### 4.1 Understanding the organization and its context

This clause requires the organisation to determine all the external issues such as legislative, economic & political conditions for the jurisdictions in which the organisation operates, and the internal issues such as stakeholder (including union) expectations that

may have relevance for the OHS Management System.

These external and internal issues set the parameters for the OHSMS so that it can effectively address all the legislative requirements etc., whilst also focussing on achieving stakeholder expectations (including workers). This could range from prioritising safety improvements through to developing a more user-friendly OHSMS.

#### 4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of interested parties

This clause requires the organisation to assess who its 'interested parties' are in terms of its OHSMS, what their needs and expectations may be, and consequently, if any of these should become compliance obligations.

An "interested party" is defined as a person or organisation that may be affected by or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity of your organisation. When considering interested parties, we need to consider the Employees, Management and shareholders, external parties, contractors and service providers, Government bodies, unions and the company insurers. Detailing the interested parties, their expectations and their level of influence, helps to set priorities and compliance obligations. And when this is combined with the context, it starts to refine the overall scope of the OHSMS.

#### 4.3 Determining the scope of the OHS Management System

The boundaries of the OHSMS must now be defined considering the interested parties and their needs, including their compliance obligations. Also requiring consideration are the OHSMS functions

and physical boundaries, all products, services and activities, including the organisation's ability to exert control on external factors, with the results of the whole definition included in the OSHMS.

There is a need to determine the scope of application within the organisation (is it whole or partial) with consideration of the nature and scale of the whole or parts of the organisation, and all of its activities that create health & safety hazards.



While it is recommended that all of these considerations are documented, ISO 45001 only requires that the scope is 'available in documented information'.

Then Sec 4.4 the standard indicates that an OHSMS should be established to achieve the desired outcomes by using interactive processes to deliver continual improvement. The ultimate objective is to improve the organisation's occupational health & safety performance.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.