





The Fundamentals

The letters I.S.O. mean International Organization for Standardization

- ISO is an organization that develops Standards for use worldwide.
- ISO 14001 helps companies do their share in protecting the environment.
- ISO 14001 Outlines criteria for a good Environmental Management System (EMS).

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is a network of standards institutes from 159 countries with a central office in Geneva, Switzerland, that coordinates the system.

ISO is a non-governmental organization that forms a bridge between the public and private sectors, and is the largest standards organization in the world.

Many of its member institutes are part of the governmental structure of their countries, or are mandated by their government.

Some members have their roots uniquely in the private sector, having been set up by national partnerships of industry associations.

Therefore, ISO enables a consensus to be reached on solutions that meet both the requirements of business and the broader needs of society.



The ISO 14001 Standard

- **Section 4.3 Planning**

Covers requirements for the planning required for the identification of:

- the environmental aspects and their impacts
- the legal and other requirements
- the environmental objectives, targets and programs

Clause 4.3 is concerned with **Planning** and has various sub-clauses.

Clause 4.3.1 - Environmental Aspects requires that there is a procedure to **identify** the environmental aspects (within the scope defined under clause 4.1) that the organization can control. It also requires that the organization must **determine** the aspects that can have a significant impact on the environment.

Note: throughout the rest of the standard, these are referred to as the "significant environmental aspects". Defining these correctly can make a huge difference to your system.

Clause 4.3.2 - Legal and other requirements requires that there is a procedure to **identify** and access applicable requirements (laws, codes of practice, customer requirements and so on) and to **determine** how these apply. Stating the obvious (hey, it's a standard!) it requires that the requirements are taken into account within the system.

Clause 4.3.3 - Objectives, Targets & Programs requires that environmental objectives and targets are **documented** at relevant functions. Where practicable, they should be measurable. There should be action plans (programs) in place to achieve these objectives and targets. These plans should include the responsibilities of the persons concerned and the means and time frames for achieving them. The plans could be in any format. The standard is not specific. So perhaps the minutes of your management reviews (see clause 4.6) could include this information.



Details of the Standard

4.4 Implementation and operation (*con't*)

- 4.4.4 Documentation

The Environmental Management System (EMS) is documented in:

- Environmental Policy
- Environmental Manual - Scope
- Procedures and Work Instructions
- Records

4.4.4 EMS Documentation

This requirement ensures that the company has documented the system (in either electronic or paper form) that addresses the clauses of the standard, describes how the company conforms to each clause and sub-clause, and provides direction to related documentation.

For this requirement, not all the EMS required activities need to be documented in procedures, as long as the system requirements can be verified. However, documentation must be provided such that enough is available to ensure the effective planning, operation, and control of processes related to the significant aspects, and to demonstrate conformance to ISO 14001.

At a minimum, such documentation includes the environmental policy, objectives and targets, a definition of the scope of the EMS, and other elements that are specific or unique to the company.