

OHS/WHS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

LSBU's Occupational Health Nursing Program Mini Lecture Series

Welcome to this information sheet on occupational health and safety (OHS) or workplace health and safety (WHS) management systems, which accompanies the mini-lecture presented by Jo Kitney for the London South Bank University's Occupational Health Nursing Degree Program. Jo Kitney is a Visiting Teaching Fellow for the London South Bank University and Managing Director of Kitney Occupational Health and Safety.

To see the mini-lecture on Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems and other lectures in this series go to: <http://vimeopro.com/kitney/lbsbu>

Introduction

Occupational health and safety is an important aspect of business management and OHS/WHS management systems or manuals are often used by organisations and businesses to put order around how health and safety will be managed. In this mini-lecture and information sheet OHS/WHS Management Systems are considered.

CONTENTS OF OHS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- What is an OHS Management System?
- How does an OHS Management System work?
- OHSAS 18001: OHS Management Systems
- Putting an OHS Management System in place



We'll look at the typical contents of an OHS/WHS management system and the structure laid down in OHSAS 18001, which is the international standard for OH&S Management Systems, as well as the different types of systems and main steps in putting a system in place.

What is an OHS/WHS Management System?

An OHS/WHS management system contains the policies, procedures, plans, forms, templates and other resources that a company uses to manage health and safety at work. An OHS/WHS management system can also be called a workplace or work health and safety (WHS) management system and, for a small business, a WHS manual.

The policies and procedures in the management system or manual lay down how OHS/WHS is managed within an organisation and who needs to do what to manage health and safety. The plans, forms and templates provide the guidance and resources needed to follow through on these responsibilities.

Management systems aren't unique to health and safety and are used across other areas of a business, such as finance, risk, HR or people management, environment and quality.

OHS/WHS management systems can be stand-alone or fit with other parts of management. Stand-alone means it is a separate system that is specifically designed to manage health and safety, whereas a system that fits across the business may be integrated with areas such as quality, environment, human resources or people management.

Deciding on an OHS/WHS Management System

The decision on the type of system to be used and whether to keep it stand-alone or integrated is really important. A system needs to suit the business and there are resource implications for putting a management system in place. The decision on the type of system is often made by senior management with input from those responsible for health and safety, from other parts of the business and, if necessary, from external specialists.

There are a number of ways a system can be provided in an organisation. It can be document based and provided through a company's directory structure, it can be on an organisation's intranet and it can be externally hosted in a cloud based system. Similar to deciding on what type of system to have, the decision on how the system will be provided is important and this decision is also generally determined by senior management.

What are the Contents of an OHS/WHS Management System?

The contents of an OHS/WHS management system are driven by the size and type of organisation, the industry the business operates in, types of workers, work activities, places or locations of work along with the obligations laid down within health and safety legislation.

The following slide shows the areas typically included in an OHS/WHS management system. It is the system that puts the structure around how these areas are managed.

CONTENTS OF OHS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

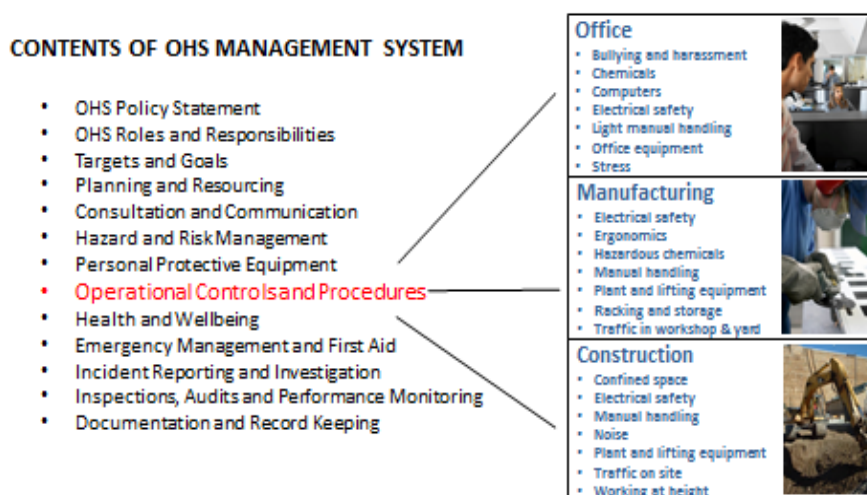
- OHS Policy Statement
- OHS Roles and Responsibilities
- Targets, Goals, Planning and Resourcing
- Consultation and Communication
- Training and Information
- Managing Hazards and Risks
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Operational Controls and Procedures
- First Aid and Emergency Management
- Incident Reporting and Management
- Monitoring Workers Health, Inspections and Audits
- Performance Reporting and Monitoring
- Documentation and Record Keeping



Although the structure for management systems may differ between organisations, within most systems there are common elements. These include identifying hazards and risks, providing training and information, personal protective equipment or first aid at work and responding to incidents or monitoring workers health.

What differs between organisations is the amount of detail or the extent of control needed for these areas, as well as the controls that are needed to manage the hazards and risks that are specific to the organisation. Generally speaking, higher risk industries (such as mining, construction or manufacturing) and larger organisations will have more comprehensive management systems than smaller, lower risk businesses.

One particular part of the OHS/WHS management system that is very organisational specific is the controls for managing hazards and risks associated with work. On the slide below there is a section called ‘Operational Controls’, which can also be referred to as ‘Managing Hazards and Risks’. The following slide shows some of the differences between a lower risk office type environment, manufacturing and construction.



For a low risk, office type environment the management system may include controls for risks such as computers, electrical safety, office equipment such as shredders or photocopiers and perhaps some lighter manual handling.

For a manufacturing environment the system may include controls for plant and equipment such as drills, conveyors, lathes, cranes, hoists and forklifts, hazardous chemicals, noise, racking and storage, traffic in a workshop or yard as well as ergonomics associated with operating equipment and working at benches.

For a construction company the system would include controls for high risk hazards such as confined space, falls from height, noise, hazardous chemicals, manual handling, electricity as well the large variety of plant and equipment used on construction sites.

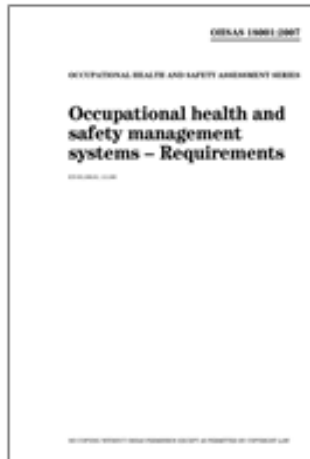
OHS/WHSAS 18001: Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems

The structure of a management system is often based on the international standard for OHS/WHS management system OHS/WHSAS 18001, which was created by a number of the world leading national certification and standards bodies and who determined that an OHS/WHS management system needed to be

strong on policies and procedures and include not only the main areas of hazards and risk but also the management input needed to manage risk.

You can see the main requirements of OHS/WHSAS 18001 on the following slide. Along with 18001, OHS/WHSAS 18002 was also produced to give guidelines on how to implement the standard.

OHSAS 18001: 2007



- 4.1 General Requirements
- 4.2 OH&S Policy
- 4.3 Planning
 - 4.3.1 Hazard identification, risk assessment and determining controls
 - 4.3.2 Legal and other requirements
 - 4.3.3 Objectives and programme(s)
- 4.4 Implementation and Operation
 - 4.4.1 Resources, roles, responsibility, accountability and authority
 - 4.4.2 Competence, training, awareness
 - 4.4.3 Communication, Participation and Consultation
 - 4.4.4 Documentation
 - 4.4.5 Control of documents
 - 4.4.6 Operational control
 - 4.4.7 Emergency preparedness and response
- 4.5 Checking
 - 4.5.1 Performance measurement and monitoring
 - 4.5.2 Evaluation of compliance
 - 4.5.3 Incident investigation, nonconformity, corrective & preventative action
 - 4.5.4 Control of records
 - 4.5.5 Internal audit
- 4.6 Management Review

The benefit of OHS/WHSAS 18001 is that, similar to other industry standards, it can be used in a number of different ways. It can be referred to help decide on the contents of a management system, it could be an internal benchmark to check that controls are in place and compliant with the system and it can be used by organisations to undergo external audit and gain accreditation against the standard.

OHS/WHSAS 18001 also maps well against national OHS/WHS management system standards, such as in Australia and New Zealand and their recognised standard AS/NZ 4801: OHS/WHS Management System.

Types of OHS/WHS Management Systems

Just as the content of a management system will differ between organisations, so will the type of system used. Smaller and lower risk organisations generally have a more simple system than a larger organisation, which may need something more comprehensive.

If you look at the slide below you can see the difference between a simple WHS Manual with forms and templates that would suit a small to medium sized business, to a comprehensive system more suited to a larger organisation.

TYPES OF OHS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



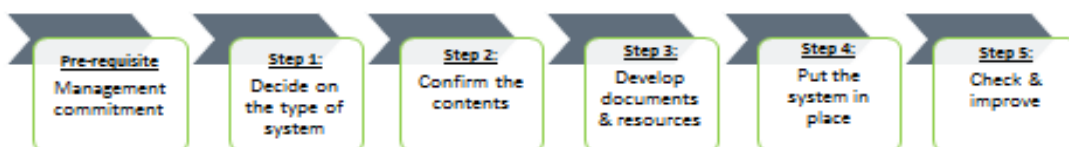
In the smaller system the WHS Manual describes how health and safety will be managed and refers to the forms and templates that need to be used. In the more comprehensive WHS management system, there is often a high level company manual that introduces the system and how it is used across the company.

There will be a series of policies that define the expectations of the company as well as procedures that lay down how hazards and risks will be managed. Similar to the smaller system, there are also forms and templates. Where an organisation has more than one site, each site may also have its own WHS Manual as part of the larger management system.

5 Steps to putting an OHS/WHS Management System in place

After ensuring the pre-requisite of genuine management commitment is in place, there are five main steps to putting a management system in place.

5 STEPS TO PUTTING AN OHS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN PLACE



Step 1 is to decide on the type of system needed. This involves looking at business needs, legal obligations, style and culture of the organisation, customer or clients requirements and what works well in the industry.

Step 2 is to work out what will be included in the management system. This involves identifying legal obligations, hazards and risks of work, locations of work and how information will be accessed.

Step 3 is to develop the documents and resources that will be included in the system. These may be just related to health and safety or they may be integrated with areas such as quality, environment and risk management. Documents also need to suit those who will use them, for example their reading capability or literacy levels, and whether documents will be used as hard copies or through a tablet or some other electronic form. A good way to ensure documents will meet workers needs is to include them in the design and development of the management system.

Step 4 is to put the system in place. This moves it from 'build' into 'use'. Letting managers, staff, contractors, and perhaps clients, know what is happening is important, as well as providing training and information. A 'roll out' plan is useful to ensure that people are involved and the right information provided. The extent of the roll out plan will depend on the size and type of organisation, but does need to address the change management needs of introducing new processes, ways of working and documents to be used.

Step 5 is to check how things are going. Done well, the management system should be a success. It's likely though that some updates and changes will be needed as the documents and resources are used. Putting in place a management system is very much a work in progress and a journey. There isn't necessarily 'an end', but more a standard that needs to be achieved and then maintained. This makes managing health and safety very much about ongoing and continuous improvement.

Further Information

For information on London South Bank University's Occupational Health Nursing Degree Program go to: <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/courses>

For information on Kitney Occupational Health and Safety and to read other information sheets and articles written by Jo Kitney, go to www.kitney.com

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