

# ISO 45001

The Cornerstone for  
An Effective Occupational Health  
and Safety Culture



# 01 The Need for a Global Safety Standard

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), more than 2.78 million deaths and nearly 374 million non-fatal injuries occur every year due to accidents and exposures at the workplace.<sup>1</sup> In the U.S. alone, the number of fatal injuries came in at over 5,333 for the year 2019.<sup>2</sup>

With companies and executives being held accountable for incidents in the workplace, the issue of workers' health and safety has become a persistent concern for organizations around the world.

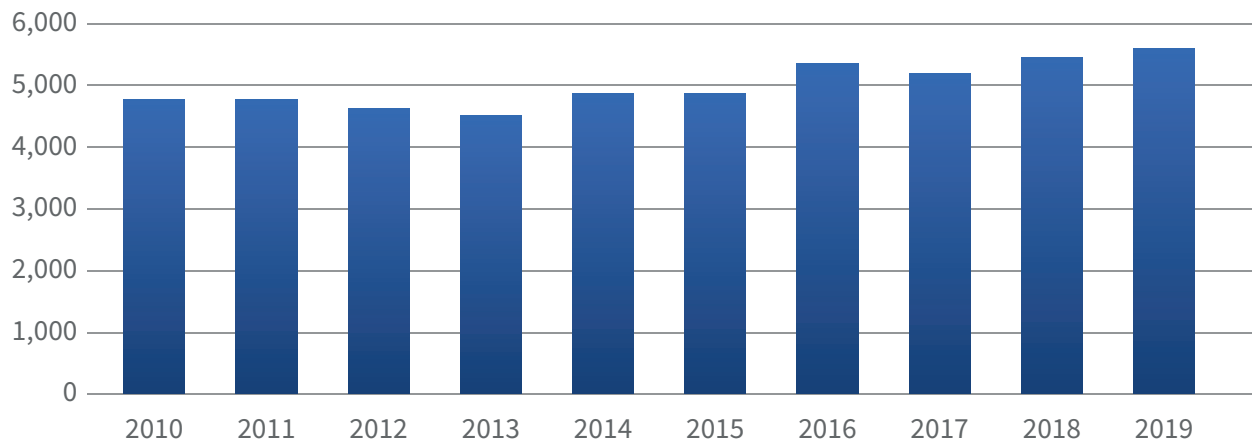


Fig. 1: Number of Fatal Work Injuries (2010-2019)

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) outlines regulations for organizations in the U.S., while the British Standards (BS) OHSAS 18001 has become accepted by organizations across the world. However, neither of these provides a comprehensive international consensus standard. The apparent need for an international consensus standard on workplace health and safety prompted the proposal of ISO 45001 in 2013.

The standard, passed in March 2018, now serves as the international guide on occupational health and safety (OH&S) and outlines relevant methods and benchmarks.

As the world's first internationally approved standard on workplace health and safety, ISO 45001 offers a single definitive framework to improve the performance of occupational health and safety management systems. It lays down clear usage guidance, as well as requirements directed at the top management of the organization to create a safe workplace for both employees and visitors. ISO 45001 also helps organizations integrate other workplace health and safety aspects like worker wellbeing.



The standard is intended to be applicable to all organizations, irrespective of size, industry, or nature of worksite. It incorporates ISO's proactive approach towards product and process quality. ISO 45001 is expected to replace BS OHSAS 18001 over the three-year period of 2018 to 2021, as mandated by the International Accreditation Forum.

- For U.S.-based organizations that have operations or supply chain partners overseas, compliance with ISO 45001 may become desirable as it replaces BS OHSAS 18001 as the most acceptable global standard.

**02**

## The Advantages of ISO 45001 Certification for U.S. Organizations

The benefits of ISO 45001 go beyond improvement in OH&S performance. An immediate benefit is the trust associated with the brand. ISO 45001 certification means better acceptance with regulators and improved reputation among prospective clients and employees.

Moreover, with OHSAS 18001 scheduled to be officially phased out on 11th September, 2021, third-party certification will need to be transitioned to ISO 45001.

By following the standard's guidance of use, organizations can move from detection mode to prevention mode in dealing with health safety performance. This translates to increased operational efficiency and productivity through improved management.

## The Intricacies of Third-Party Partner Compliance

Applying the hierarchy of control measures can eliminate hazards and reduce OH&S risks. However, this practice is not limited to the internal framework of the organization. When it comes to controlling risks and reducing business exposure, enterprises need to extend oversight to external operational entities like suppliers, contractors, and sub-contractors. This is emphasized by ISO 45001, which states that organizations are responsible for the health and safety of any individual working at the facility, irrespective of their employer.

In other words, organizations need to assume equal responsibility for contractors and employees, particularly those working in their facilities. This includes assessing and controlling risks arising from:



It's important to ensure that contractors and suppliers are compliant with the organizational OH&S policies, and thereby establish uniform control measures to prevent workplace incidents.





## Managing Contractors' H&S

For many organizations, contractors perform a wide array of operational services, such as manufacturing, maintenance, security, administration, and so on. This makes exerting control over compliance a complicated process. Moreover, organizations also need to investigate contractors' OH&S records and identify any notifiable accidents, improvement or prohibition notices, and prosecutions.

- Organizations are expected to ensure processes exist for worker safety at jobsites outside of the organization, for instance, at a supplier or vendor facility. However, supply chains have become increasingly complex and widely-distributed in recent years, making it difficult for some organizations to trace back their supply chain's ISO 45001 compliance .

### Considerations for the Contractor Selection Process

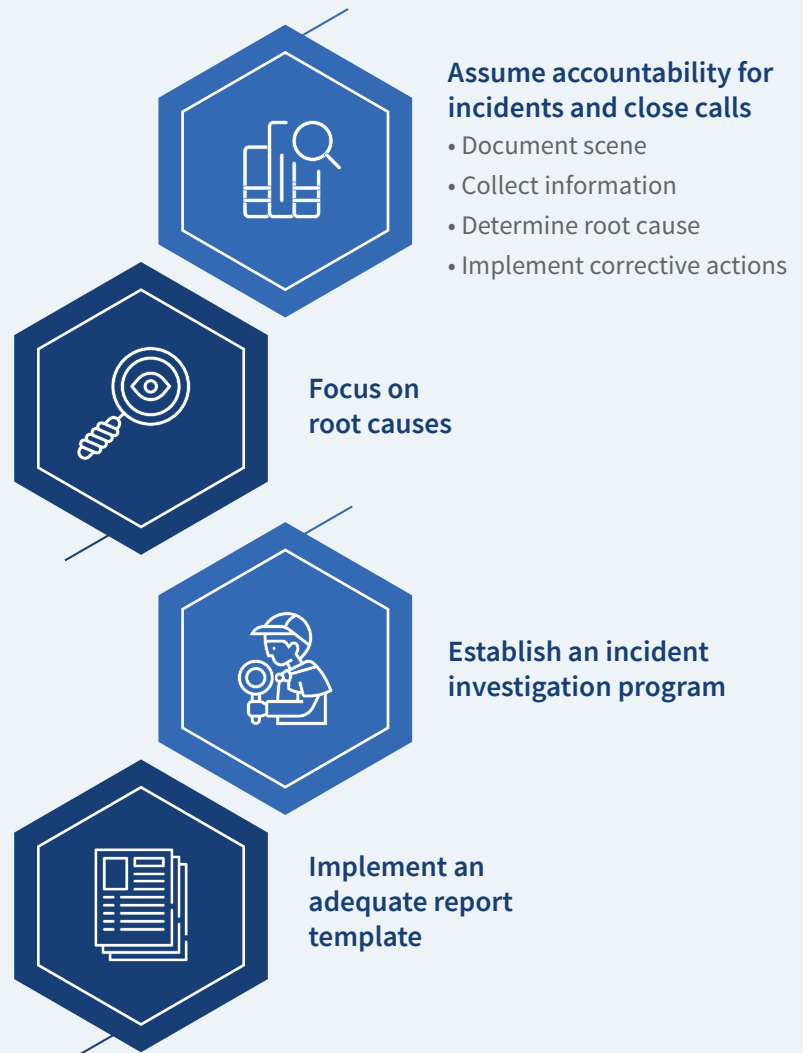
The complexity of the process makes it difficult to pin-point a single effective method of selecting a contractor. A company's selection process depends on their policies, their relationship with the contractor, the service provided, and risks and hazards associated with the service. However, the underlying regulatory guidelines still apply, and at the end of the day, the responsibility of specifying contractor activities and processes is on the organization.



## Gauging your Contactors' OH&S Framework

The organization needs to review each contractor's OH&S management documentation and define safety criteria in contract documents and service level agreements (SLAs). This involves assessing risks, work instructions, method statements, and safety statements. Contract workers, on their part, need to take responsibility of reporting nonconformities to which the organization can take corrective actions.

The organization also needs to ensure that in the event of workplace accident or hazardous exposure, the contractor has an adequate incident investigation process in place.



## Sub-contracting and its Prerequisites

In case of sub-contracting or outsourcing, ISO 45001 considers the part of the process that has been outsourced to be an extension of the organization's process. This outsourced activity continues to be a part of the organization's occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS) framework, and the responsibility for conforming to the standard lies with the organization. The organization can choose the degree of control they need to exercise on factors like the services provided and the potential impact of the outsourced activity on the organization.

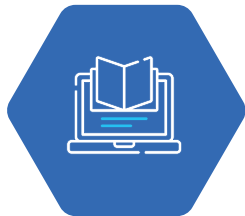
## Procurement's Role in Compliance

The organization needs to ensure that purchases are safe for use by workers. This involves confirming legal and technical equipment certification and material certifications. In addition to this, organizations need to conduct risk assessments prior to the use of the equipment and material.

# The Nuances of Certification

ISO 45001 is not a specification standard. This means it requires organizations to have a robust incident investigation process in place, but it does not specify the process itself. Many organizations already adhere to some form of health and safety standard like BS OHSAS 18001. However, the replacement of BS OHSAS 18001 with ISO 45001 could lead organizations to opt for the more uniform management ecosystem promised by the international standard.

## The Pathway to Certification:



### Learn

Understand the standard and figure out enterprise-wide compliance requirements.



### Perform Gap Analysis & Initial OH&S Review and Risk Analysis

- Use a checklist to determine where you need to change the existing compliance standards
- Use OH&S checklists to identify areas that need attention in specific workplaces
- Complete the risk management analysis to identify hazards, assess risks and determine controls



### Plan

Chart out a project plan in order to meet the ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety Standards



### Educate your Organization

Train your employees on the ISO 45001 compliance requirements



### Design and Document

Ensure that all your OH&S procedures are well documented. Also redesign the existing procedures to meet the requirements of the new standard.



### Audit

Conduct regular internal audits to ensure that the compliance requirements are regularly met.



It is not mandatory for companies to adopt ISO 45001, but it is a good way to ensure consistent safety standards across the organization. And while ISO 45001 is based on the BS OHSAS 18001, there are substantial differences between the two. This move from OHSAS 18001 to ISO 45001 will require companies to go through a careful gap analysis. Enterprises can invest in the services of a reputed accreditation organization to understand the nuances of the standard.

The extent to which ISO 45001 requires organizations to take responsibility of OH&S demands a rigorous contractor and supplier selection process. This includes thorough audits to confirm the compliance of each potential contractor and supplier.

## This is where Avetta can help.

We simplify the certification process by ensuring all your supplier criteria are met. Avetta's supplier and procurement pre-qualification platform lets you configure qualification parameters to suit your ISO 45001 requirements. The platform even lets you choose from a range of compliant prospects.

With our worker management solution, you can make sure you hire adequately qualified supplier employees. This lets you maintain a safe and healthy work environment with reduced workplace hazard risks, improves your OH&S performance, and smoothens out the road to your ISO 45001 certification.

Our processes are attuned to provide organizations with all relevant OHSMS frameworks before the contract documentation process. We also support you with field audits that ensure continuous adherence to your policies. Learn more about how Avetta's supplier auditing solutions can help you adhere to the highest workplace safety standards.

As a new global standard, ISO 45001 will continue to reshape organizations' approach to health and safety, both in and out of the workplace. Learn why you need to stay prepared for it in this on-demand webinar, where experts Travis W. Vance and Tom Cecich discuss the impact of ISO 45001 on businesses.





## References

<sup>1</sup> Source: International Labor Organization: Safety and Health at Work,  
<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics: Press Release,  
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics: Press Release,  
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cfoi.pdf>



### About Avetta

Avetta connects global organizations with 150K + qualified suppliers, contractors, and vendors across 120+ countries. We support the continued growth of 500+ clients and their supply chains through trusted contractor prequalification, safety audits, monitoring, and more. With real results in reducing incidents, our highly configurable solutions elevate safety and sustainability in every workplace.