



ISO 14001:2015 ISO/TC 207/SC 1 reviewed interpretations 2024

Version – March 2024

Introduction

To help clarify the intent of ISO 14001:2015, the ISO process allows for interpretations to be provided by each National Member Body (NMB).

The sub-committee (SC1) has a process for managing interpretations of ISO 14001:2015. It is important to note that Interpretations do not change the requirements in ISO 14001:2015 but are intended to give users a better understanding on ISO 14001:2015.

The SC1 process includes:

- it is the responsibility of each National Member Body (NMB) to respond to any interpretation enquiries it receives;
- NMB interpretations are submitted to SC1 on an annual basis and reviewed at the SC1 plenary;
- after the review, the interpretation is made available to the public via the e-Committee and the SC1 website;
- questions about the interpretation should be referred to the NMB where the interpretation originated.

Please note that some NMB use the term ‘clarification of intent’ instead of the term ‘interpretation’.

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| General | ISO 14001:2015 has a very different structure than the two previous versions. Our documentation is aligned to the clauses that existed in the previous version. Do we have to restructure our documentation to follow the new clause structure? | No. Clause A.2 states: “The clause structure and some of the terminology of this International Standard have been changed to improve alignment with other management systems standards. There is, however, no requirement in this International Standard for its clause structure or terminology to be applied to an organization’s environmental management system documentation.” | SCC - Standards Council of Canada | 2017 |

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[SC1 website related to interpretations](#)



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| <p>General</p> | <p>The question deals with the issue where to draw the border line between legal requirements on the protection of the natural environment and those protecting occupational health and safety issues, when it comes to certification of an environmental management system under ISO 14001. The certification body found that our environmental management system did not fully comply with the requirements in ISO 14001:2015, since the documentation of legal requirements, linked to some of the environmental aspects, did not include some of the pieces of legislation covering occupational health and safety issues. According to our company there is no link between any of the environmental aspects and occupational health and safety issues.</p> | <p>All organizations are obliged to comply with all applicable legislation. This case deals with the legal requirements that need to be taken into account in the environmental management system under ISO 14001:2015. The standard says that the organization shall "determine and have access to the compliance obligations related to its environmental aspects, determine how these compliance obligations apply to the organization and take these compliance obligations into account when establishing, implementing, maintaining and continually improving its environmental management system" (Section 6.1.3). Furthermore, the organization shall "maintain documented information of its compliance obligations" (Section 6.1.3).</p> <p>The concept of compliance obligations is broader than legal requirements, i e it is a generic term for "legal and other requirements". The handling of such other requirements follow the same procedure that applies to the legal requirements.</p> <p>According to the question, there are no environmental aspects in this case that can be linked to legal requirements concerning occupational health and safety issues, implying that they do not need to be included the mentioned documented information in accordance with the requirements of ISO 14001:2015. However, it is necessary to pay attention to some</p> | <p>SIS - Swedish Institute for Standards</p> | <p>2018</p> |



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| | | <p>regulation outside the environmental arena. For example, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, may have issued legislation on the transport of hazardous goods that may include rules that are applicable to both the natural and working environment. In principle, the same procedures apply for those organizations that still use ISO 14001: 2004.</p> <p>However, organizations that have implemented an environmental management system under ISO 14001 may find it useful to include other than environmental issues in its management system. If so, an organization may consider it appropriate that its management system keeps track of both environmental and non-environmental legal requirements of importance. Such aspects and legal requirements shall not be considered and consequently be excluded in the certification of an environmental management system established under the ISO 14001: 2015. If, on the other hand, the organization has chosen to include non-environmental issues in the scope of its environmental management system it also includes corresponding legal requirements.</p> | | |
| General 6.1.1, 6.1.3 | In some places in the Standard, the organization is directed to take certain items into account, while in other places in the Standard, the organization is directed to “consider” certain items. Is there a difference? | ISO 14001 uses the word “consider” and the phrase “take into account” with a specific intent. The word “consider” means it is necessary to think about the topic but it can be excluded; whereas “take into account” means it is necessary to think about the topic but it cannot be excluded. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | <p>As an example, in Section 6.1.1, when planning its EMS, the organization shall consider the issues referred to in Section 4.1, “Understanding the organization’s context”. ISO 14001 requires the organization to think about these issues, but it does not necessarily have to address these issues in its EMS. Alternatively, in Section 6.1.3, “Compliance obligations” for example, the requirement “take these compliance obligations into account when establishing, implementing, maintaining and continually improving its EMS, means the organization must address its compliance obligations in its EMS.</p> | | |
| 3 | <p>Are the references to other standards in the Notes to Entry in Clause 3 (Terms and definitions) normative?</p> | <p>No.</p> <p>A normative reference is a reference to another document that is indispensable for the application of the standard. If a document is normatively referenced, an organization must conform to it in order to conform with the standard. As Clause 2 states, there are no normative references in ISO 14001:2015.</p> <p>ISO 14001 is a standalone document that can be applied without reference to any other documents.</p> <p>While “Notes to Entry” in Clause 3 (Terms and definitions) are normative, references to other standards in those Notes to Entry are informative only.</p> <p>For example, Notes 3 and 4 to Entry 3.2.10 (“risk”) refer to definitions of “events”, “consequences” and “likelihood” in ISO</p> | <p>SCC - Standards Council of Canada</p> | 2017 |



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| | | <p>Guide 73:2009. Note 4 to Entry 3.4.1 (“audit”) refers to definitions of “audit evidence” and “audit criteria” in ISO 19011:2011.</p> <p>These references to other standards are provided for information only. There is no need to purchase additional standards. Furthermore, anyone interested in the terms and definitions in other ISO standards can preview elements of these standards on the ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP) at no charge, including the Foreword, Introduction, Scope, Normative references and Terms and definitions.</p> <p>Access is enabled by visiting the ISO site at https://www.iso.org/obp/ui.</p> | | |
| 3.0, 3.2.6, 6.2 | <p>Is Section 3, Terms and Definitions, binding and, if so, may an auditor determine whether "appropriate" environmental objectives have been set to meet the requirements of definitions 3.2.6?</p> | <p>The Introduction to Section 3, Terms and Definitions states: “For purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.” The only sections of ISO 14001 against which an organization’s conformance is audited are Sections 4 through 10, EMS Requirements, the terms of which are clarified by the Definitions in Section 3. With regard to environmental objectives, an auditor is limited to assessing whether the organization conforms to the requirements specified in Section 6.2. If the environmental objectives are consistent with the environmental policy, and their development has taken into account the organization’s significant environmental aspects and associated</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | <p>2019</p> |



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| | | <p>compliance obligations and considered its risks and opportunities then the objectives are consistent with the standard.</p> | | |
| <p>3.1.5</p> | <p>Are there any situations in which “top management” refers to persons outside the scope of the environmental management system?</p> | <p>No. Top management is defined in relation to the scope of the EMS. If the EMS covers the entire organization, top management is the person or people who direct and control the entire organization. If the EMS covers only part of an organization, top management is the person or people who direct and control that part of the organization. Note 2 to Entry in the definition of top management (3.1.5) is intended to clarify this point, but the phrase “the scope of the management system” in that Note to Entry might lead to some confusion. This phrase means the scope of the <i>environmental</i> management system. It should not be misunderstood as a reference to an organization’s generic management system, quality management system or some other discipline-specific management system. It is not intended to broaden the scope of the EMS beyond what the organization has established or to extend the scope of the internal audit beyond the scope of the EMS.</p> | <p>SCC - Standards Council of Canada</p> | <p>2017</p> |
| <p>3.2.9</p> | <p>Does the term “compliance obligation” in ISO 14001:2015 have the same meaning as the phrase “legal requirements and other requirements to</p> | <p>Yes. Clause A.3 states: “The phrase ‘compliance obligations’ replaces the phrase ‘legal requirements and other requirements to which the organization subscribes’ used in</p> | <p>SCC - Standards Council of Canada</p> | <p>2017</p> |



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| | which the organization subscribes” in the previous edition? | prior editions of this International Standard. The intent of this new phrase does not differ from that of the previous edition.” | | |
| 3.2.10 | There appears to be ambiguity in ISO 14001:2015 regarding whether the term “risk” has only a negative connotation or includes both negative and positive connotations. The definition of “risk” (3.2.10) states that risk can be positive or negative, but the definition of “risks and opportunities”(3.2.11) implies that risk is only negative, while opportunities are positive. May an organization decide for itself whether to use the term “risk” in its Environmental Management System as a solely negative concept or as both a negative and positive concept? | Yes. ISO 14001:2015 requires an organization to identify and address both the potential adverse and the potential beneficial effects of uncertainty, but the organization may decide for itself what terminology it will use to capture these concepts. Each organization may decide for itself whether to use the term “risk” to capture potential adverse effects of uncertainty and the term “opportunities” to capture potential positive effects of uncertainty, or to use the term “risk” to encompass both potential negative and positive effects of uncertainty. As Annex A.2 states, there is no requirement to apply the terminology used in the standard to the organization’s EMS documentation, or to replace the terms used by the organization with the terms used in the standard. In deciding what terms to use, organizations should be aware that although the definitions of “risk” (3.2.10) and “risks and opportunities” (3.2.11) take different approaches to the concept of risk, only the term “risks and opportunities” is used in the clauses of the standard that contain requirements. | SCC - Standards Council of Canada | 2017 |
| 3.3.4 | In Note 1 to Entry 3.3.4 “outsource,” does the phrase “outside the scope of the management system” mean “outside the scope of the <i>environmental</i> management system”? | Yes. The intent of the definition of “outsource” in ISO 14001:2015 is to cover situations where a process or function that is within the scope of the environmental management system is | SCC - Standards Council of Canada | 2017 |



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| | | <p>performed by an organization that is outside the organizational boundaries of the environmental management system as determined by the organization. The definition is not intended to capture processes or functions that are outside the scope of the environmental management system as established by the organization.</p> | | |
| <p>4.1 4.2 7.5</p> | <p>Is an organization required to establish a process in order to meet the requirements in 4.1 and 4.2 that it determine its context, relevant interested parties and their needs and expectations?</p> <p>Is an organization required to develop and maintain documented lists of its external and internal issues, its relevant interested parties and their needs and expectations?</p> | <p>Clauses 4.1 and 4.2 do not state a requirement for a process nor does it state a requirement for maintaining or retaining documented information.</p> <p>The intent behind using the word “determine” is that the organization generates information (knowledge) regarding its “understanding of the needs and expectations of interested parties” and of its “external and internal issues.” A secondary intent in changing from the use of the word “identify” in the 2004 edition of ISO 14001 to “determine” in the 2015 edition is to conform to Annex SL management system terminology.</p> <p>The term “determine” implies that the organization make some specific effort to generate information that results in knowledge. While a process is not required for these determinations, whether or not to have a process is a consideration for the organization to make when developing its EMS (See Clause 4.4).</p> <p>The decision to document the knowledge gained or the means of acquiring it is made by the organization by considering</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | <p>2017</p> |



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| | | <p>Clause 7.5.1, which gives the organization flexibility as to which processes it needs to document and records it needs to keep in order to make the EMS effective. If the organization decides documentation is the best way to give guidance to users and to achieve consistency, then documentation should be considered.</p> <p>Whether documented or not, an understanding of the relevant needs and expectations of interested parties as well as of external and internal issues would be evident in the implemented EMS; for example, in the determination of risks and opportunities that need to be addressed.</p> | | |
| <p>4.3</p> | <p>Does ISO 14001 clause 4.3 (or any other clause) require the organization to implement an EMS for ALL activities/business lines performed within the physical boundary of its facility? Does ISO 14001 require that all activities within the physical boundaries of a site that can be controlled or influenced are to be included in the scope? Or can an organization choose to limit the scope of its EMS to only certain activities/business lines?</p> | <p>No, ISO 14001 does not specify the boundaries and applicability of an organization’s environmental management system (EMS). An organization has the right to define its boundaries when establishing the scope of its EMS.</p> <p>ISO 14001:2015 Clause 4.3 requires the organization itself to define and document the boundaries of its EMS, and it can choose to define the scope to include the whole organization, or specific and identified functions or sections of the organization.</p> <p>However, the scope should not be defined in a way that misleads interested parties. Once the scope is defined it cannot exclude activities, products, or services that have or can have significant environmental aspects, or that evade compliance obligations.</p> | <p>ANSI</p> | <p>2024</p> |



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| 4 and 6 | Does ISO 14001 require an organization to demonstrate that it has addressed requirements related to environmental aspects, significant environmental aspects, policy commitments, context issues and concerns, risk and opportunities and compliance obligations individually for each corresponding sub-clause in ISO 14001, or can an organization demonstrate that it has addressed these collectively, through the significant environmental aspects determination process? For example, can an organization consider its policy commitments, context and compliance obligations to inform its determination of significant aspects? | ISO 14001 does not mandate separate processes or procedures to be used for “addressing” its requirements – provided the requirements are, in fact, addressed. For example, an organization might have a single “environmental planning” process that addresses a number of requirements set out in Clauses 4 and 6. The organization needs to provide evidence that each of the separate requirements are addressed. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| (4 and 6) 6.1.1 6.1.2 3.2.11 3.2.2 | Does ISO 14001:2015 allow an organization to consider environmental risks and opportunities as environmental aspects, and those aspects that it intends to address, as its significant environment aspects? | There is a relationship between an organization’s significant environmental aspects and the risks and opportunities related to its environmental aspects (see 6.1.1), but they should not be necessarily treated as identical. The definition of “risks and opportunities” is not the same as “significant environmental aspects.” ISO 14001 defines risks and opportunities as potential adverse effects (threats) and potential beneficial effects (opportunities). A significant environmental aspect is defined as an environmental aspect (3.2.2) that has or can have one or more significant environmental impact(s), whether adverse or beneficial. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2018 |



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| | | <p>Environmental aspects can result in risks and opportunities, which can be determined as part of the significance evaluation, or determined separately. If an aspect has been identified as a significant environmental aspect, the organization would need to address the identified risks and opportunities associated with this aspect, in order to minimize or prevent its adverse impact, or enhance its beneficial effect on the environment.</p> <p>However, there may be other risks and opportunities that need to be addressed in the environmental management system (see 6.1.1). This can include risks or opportunities for an organization, related to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · its compliance obligations (see 6.1.3); · other issues and requirements referred to in 4.1 and 4.2, e.g., risks or opportunities from environmental conditions that can affect the organization in negative or positive ways. | | |
| <p>5.2 [secondary references : 4.2, 5.3, 6.1.3, 6.1.4, 6.2., 7.2, 7.3,</p> | <p>What is meant by the “commitment to fulfil its compliance obligations” in Section 5.2(d) in ISO 14001?</p> | <p>The relationship between ISO 14001 and regulatory compliance is addressed in a number of places in ISO 14001. To understand what is meant by the “commitment to fulfill its compliance obligations,” the standard has to be read as a whole and the relationship between the relevant provisions of the standard understood. This commitment is demonstrated through the EMS processes and actions that</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | <p>2019</p> |



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| 7.4.3, 7.5.1, 9.1., 9.2, 9.3, 10.2] | | <p>the organization establishes, implements and maintains to meet ISO 14001 requirements, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With an understanding of the needs and expectation of the organization’s interested parties, including regulatory agencies in particular (Section 4.2), establish, implement and maintain a process to determine and have access to the applicable legal requirements, and to determine how these requirements apply to the organization (Section 6.1.3). Take these requirements into account when planning its EMS (Section 6.1.4). • Establish documented objectives that take into account its legal requirements associated with its significant environmental aspects (Section 6.2.1). [Note: environmental objectives need not address every legal requirement]. • Plan actions to achieve environmental objectives, including those relating to compliance with legal requirements (Section 6.2.2). • Those persons whose work can affect the organization’s ability to fulfill its compliance obligations must be competent based on training, education and/or experience (Section 7.2). • Ensure persons doing work under the organization’s control are aware of the implications of not conforming with the EMS, including not fulfilling the organization’s compliance obligations (Section 7.3). | | |



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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate EMS information externally, as required by the organization’s compliance obligations and its own communication process (Section 7.4.3). • Establish, implement and maintain a process to periodically evaluate compliance with legal requirements (Section 9.1.2). These are the legal requirements identified pursuant to Section 6.1.3. • Establish, implement and maintain a program for periodically conducting EMS audits, which necessarily include those elements of the EMS that are compliance-related (Section 9.2). • React to nonconformities, evaluate the need for action eliminate the cause(s) and implement corrective action needed (Section 10.2). Detected non-compliance with legal requirements must be corrected. <p>Taken together, these provisions mean that an organization implementing ISO 14001 must systematically identify and manage its compliance obligations in line with its commitment to fulfill them. The organization’s EMS must include the components listed above and be properly supported with adequate resources and defined responsibilities (Section 5.3), documented information (Section 7.5.1), and evaluation of performance (Section 9). The commitment to comply is reinforced by the</p> | | |



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| | | <p>requirement that top management periodically review the adequacy, suitability and effectiveness of the EMS (Section 9.3).</p> <p>A legal noncompliance is not necessarily elevated to an EMS nonconformity if, for example, it is identified and corrected by the EMS processes. Compliance-related nonconformities need to be corrected, even if those nonconformities have not resulted in an actual noncompliance.</p> | | |
| 5.2, 4.3 | <p>Element 5.2 Environmental Policy states, ‘top management shall establish, implement and maintain an environmental policy that, within the defined scope of its EMS, is...’ Does this mean that the policy statement must now include wording from the scope statement to link the operations of a location to the policy statement?</p> | <p>No. The Standard requires that an organization define and document the scope of its EMS (Section 4.3) and that top management establish, implement and maintain an environmental policy (Section 5.2). However, there is no requirement in ISO 14001 that an organization include specific wording from its EMS scope statement within its environmental policy.</p> <p>As used in Section 5.2, the phrase ‘within the defined scope of its environmental management system’ is intended to promote consistency between the scope statement and the environmental policy. In particular, this phrase reinforces the concept that the policy must be appropriate to the nature, scale and environmental impacts associated with the full range of activities, products and services covered by the EMS scope.</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute (05-05-A1)</p> | 2019 |



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| | | It is not necessary to include wording from the scope statement in the policy. | | |
| 5.2, 4.3, 3.1.4 | In determining whether the environmental policy is "appropriate to the purpose and context of the organization, including the nature, scale and environmental impacts of its activities, products and services," is it relevant for an auditor to determine whether the scope of the policy covers all of the management units within the organization being audited? | The auditor must determine whether the policy is appropriate for all of those management units that are within the scope of the EMS, as it has been defined by the organization. Once the scope has been defined, all activities, products, and services that fall within its boundaries need to be included. The sum of those units must be consistent with the Section 3.1.4 definition of an "organization." | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 6.1 | Does the organization have to identify at least one risk or opportunity that needs to be addressed, i.e. at least one potential adverse effect (threat) or beneficial effect (opportunity) that needs to be addressed? | <p>Although there is no explicit requirement in Clause 6.1. of ISO 14001:2015 that an organization will identify one or more risks or opportunities that need to be addressed, there is an underlying assumption that the organization will do so.</p> <p>Risks and opportunities are defined as potential adverse effects (threats) or beneficial effects (opportunities), which may result from environmental aspects, compliance obligations, or from other issues and requirements identified as part of the context of the organization. The intent is for the organization to determine which risks or opportunities it considers to be important to address within its EMS, in order to achieve the intended outcomes of its EMS and support continual improvement.</p> | | 2017 |



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| <p>6.1.2 (related clauses 3.2.1, 3.2.2)</p> | <p>If an operation requires hearing protection would noise be an environmental aspect since humans appears in the definition of environment?</p> | <p>ISO 14001 defines an environmental aspect as an element of an organization’s activities or products or services that interacts or can interact with the environment, and notes that it can cause environmental impact(s), i.e., adverse or beneficial change(s) to the environment. The environment is defined as surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelationships.</p> <p>In order to meet the definition of environmental aspect, the noise would therefore need to be an element of the organization’s activities, products, or services that</p> <p>a) interacts or can interact with the surroundings in which the organization operates, and</p> <p>b) can cause a change to the organization’s surroundings.</p> <p>Worker exposure to noise in practice falls within the realm of occupational health and safety management systems.</p> <p>Therefore, exposure to noise does not necessarily qualify as an environmental aspect. However, if the noise from the workplace extends to and interacts with the organization’s external surroundings, it would qualify as an environmental aspect.</p> | <p>ANSI</p> | <p>2022</p> |
| <p>6.1.2</p> | <p>Does ISO 14001:2015 require Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) to be completed as part of the enhanced life cycle perspective requirements?</p> | <p>ISO 14044:2006 Clause 3.2.1, defines a life cycle assessment as “a compilation and evaluation of the inputs, outputs and the</p> | <p>ANSI - American National</p> | <p>2016</p> |



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| | | <p>potential environmental impacts of a product system throughout its life cycle”.</p> <p>ISO 14001:2015 requires taking a life cycle perspective. In Annex A6.1.2, a life cycle perspective is explained as follows: “This does not require a detailed life cycle assessment; thinking carefully about the life cycle stages that can be controlled or influenced by the organization is sufficient”. The life cycle stages of a product (or service) include acquisition of raw materials, design, production, transportation/delivery, use, end-of life treatment and final disposal (3.3.3). In Clause 6.1.2, ISO 14001:2015 requires the organization to consider these life cycle stages when determining the environmental aspects that it can control or can influence.</p> | Standards Institute | |
| 6.1.2 | Must a regulated environmental aspect automatically be considered a significant environmental aspect? | No. Section 6.1.2 requires an organization to “determine those aspects that have or can have a significant environmental impact, i.e., significant environmental aspects, by using established criteria.” ISO 14001 does not establish the criteria for determining significance. Section A.6.2 states that environmental criteria are the primary and minimum criteria for assessing environmental aspects, but it is the organization that sets the criteria for determining those that are significant. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| 6.1.2 | Does ISO 14001:2015 require the organization to apply a life cycle perspective when determining which of its environmental aspects are significant, i.e., in its criteria for determining significance? | <p>In Clause 6.1.2 of ISO 14001:2015, an organization needs to consider a life cycle perspective when identifying the environmental aspects that it can control or influence.</p> <p>There is no single method for determining significant environmental aspects. As stated in A.6.1.2, environmental criteria are the primary and minimum criteria for assessing environmental aspects to determine significance. The organization has the autonomy to apply additional criteria, including criteria related to life cycle perspective.</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2016 |
| 6.1.2 | Is it permissible for a small organization to declare that they have no significant aspects and still be conformant to the ISO 14001 standard? | <p>Although there is no explicit requirement in ISO 14001 that an organization will identify one or more significant environmental aspects, there is an underlying assumption that the organization will do so. The intent of the requirement to determine those aspects that an organization considers significant is to enable the organization to focus attention and resources on its most important environmental aspects, recognizing that not all aspects require or deserve the same degree of management. ISO 14001 does not define “significance” nor does it identify any external or absolute standard for what will be considered significant. Significance is intended to be a relative term. What is significant for one organization may not be for another, and what an organization considers a significant aspect may change over time. The use of</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | <p>‘significance’ in ISO 14001 was intended to be an aid in managing a range of environmental aspects.</p> <p>There is no special category of requirements in ISO 14001 for “small” organizations. The requirements for an ISO 14001 EMS, including those regarding significant aspects, are intended to apply to “...all types and sizes of organizations...”</p> <p>Note: Regarding whether an organization has to identify at least one risk or opportunity that needs to be addressed, i.e., at least one potential adverse effect (threat) or beneficial effect (opportunity), see COI 16-08.A2.</p> | | |
| 6.1.2 | If an organization implements an EMS that includes multiple facilities at different locations, does the standard require or imply that at least one significant environmental aspect be identified at each site? | The requirements in ISO 14001 apply to the organization’s EMS, according to the scope defined by the organization. Consistent with the ISO Interpretation based on ANSI COI 04-03-A1, there is an underlying implication that an organization identifies at least one significant environmental aspect in relation to activities, products or services within the defined scope of its EMS. There is no specific requirement for determining significant environmental aspects by location, although an organization may choose to do so. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2020 |
| 6.1.3 | Does Section 6.1.3 “Compliance obligations” require that the “facility” (the relevant organization) must have its own direct knowledge of the environmental legal | This question refers specifically to Section 6.1.3 which requires that “The organization shall determine and have access to compliance obligations related to its environmental aspects”. | ANSI - American National | 2019 |



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| | <p>requirements that are applicable to its products in all countries into which they may be exported and not be able to rely on either a related corporate entity which sells the product in a foreign country or an independent importer customer to which it ships the product to have and apply such information?</p> | <p>With regard to products, the Standard does not specify geographic boundaries, nor how the determination and access requirements can be accomplished by the organization. Section 6.1.1 requires the organization to establish, implement and maintain a process to meet the requirements in 6.1.2 – 6.1.4. Therefore, it is up to the organization to establish a process as to how it will determine and have access to such legal requirements. This may depend largely on the scope of the EMS and the level of control or influence an organization can exercise over its products as stated in Section 6.1.2. If the organization defines its process as depending on outside organizations to assist it in meeting that requirement, then that is the choice of the organization. The Standard provides flexibility to the organization to define how such legal requirements will be determined and who will do it.</p> | Standards Institute | |
| 6.1.3 | <p>Must an organization have access to the ISO 14001 standard either in hard copy, via computer or by an external source since the organization is certified to that standard?</p> | <p>An organization seeking to conform to ISO 14001 must have access to information related to the ISO 14001 requirements, including any subsequent revision, so that it can take these requirements into account in establishing, implementing and maintaining its environmental management system.</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | Several sources of this information are available to an organization including, but not limited to, an electronic or hard copy of the ISO 14001 standard itself. | | |
| 6.1.3, 3.2.1 | Can an organization address only applicable EPA legal requirements when identifying its legal requirements affecting the EMS and exclude any applicable OSHA requirement when the definition of environment in ISO 14001 states "surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelationships"? | Clause 6.1.3, "Compliance obligations" requires an organization to determine the legal requirements and other requirements that it has to, or chooses to, comply with related to its environmental aspects. Regulations issued by an "environmental" agency are not necessarily the only legal requirements applicable to environmental aspects. It is not a matter of which agency issues a legal requirement, but rather whether that requirement applies to an identified environmental aspect within the scope of the EMS. While "humans" are included in the definition of environment, not all legal requirements that apply to "humans" are necessarily applicable to its environmental aspects, or part of its EMS. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 6.1.3, 7.5.3, 3.2.9 | Is ISO 14001 Standard a "compliance obligation" under Clause 6.1.3 and also a document of external origin? | Yes, ISO 14001 is a "compliance obligation". ISO 14001 defines compliance obligations (see 3.2.9) to include requirements that an organization has to or chooses to comply with, and notes that these can arise from mandatory requirements as well as voluntary commitments, such as organizational and industry standards, and codes of practice. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | <p>ISO 14001 is documented information of external origin. The organization cannot update it on its own. The Technical Committee, through ISO, issues revisions.</p> | | |
| <p>6.1.3, 6.1.2, 7.5.1</p> | <p>Does clause 6.1.3(a) mean that an organization must demonstrate a linkage, if any, between each aspect and its applicable legal and other requirements (i.e., its compliance obligations)? If so, what documentation is required?</p> | <p>Clause 6.1.3(a) of ISO14001 requires an organization to determine and have access to the legal requirements that the organization has to or chooses to comply with (i.e., compliance obligations) related to its environmental aspects. An organization must identify and have access to the requirements that pertain to its environmental aspects, and must also know how these requirements apply to the organization. The intent is that the organization understands these requirements sufficiently to address them in the EMS. ISO 14001 does not require establishing a “linkage” between each environmental aspect and the identified compliance obligations.</p> <p>Regarding documentation, ISO 14001 Clause 6.1.3 requires the organization to maintain documented information of its compliance obligations. However, there is no specific requirement in ISO 14001 for documenting the determination of how compliance obligations apply. Clause 7.5.1(b) Documented Information - General leaves it up to each organization to determine the documented information that is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the EMS.</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | <p>2019</p> |



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| 6.1.3 | Does Section 6.1.3 “Compliance obligations” require that the “facility” (the relevant organization) must have its own direct knowledge of the environmental legal requirements that are applicable to its products in all countries into which they may be exported and not be able to rely on either a related corporate entity which sells the product in a foreign country or an independent importer customer to which it ships the product to have and apply such information? | <p>This question refers specifically to Section 6.1.3 which requires that “The organization shall determine and have access to compliance obligations related to its environmental aspects”.</p> <p>With regard to products, the Standard does not specify geographic boundaries, nor how the determination and access requirements can be accomplished by the organization. Section 6.1.1 requires the organization to establish, implement and maintain a process to meet the requirements in 6.1.2 – 6.1.4. Therefore, it is up to the organization to establish a process as to how it will determine and have access to such legal requirements. This may depend largely on the scope of the EMS and the level of control or influence an organization can exercise over its products as stated in Section 6.1.2. If the organization defines its process as depending on outside organizations to assist it in meeting that requirement, then that is the choice of the organization. The Standard provides flexibility to the organization to define how such legal requirements will be determined and who will do it.</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 6.1.3, 7.5.3 | Are the compliance obligations identified under Clause 6.1.3 also documented information of external origin under clause 7.5.3? | Yes, as long as the source of the documented information that contains the compliance obligations is generated, | ANSI - American National | 2019 |



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| | | documented and controlled by an entity external to the organization. | Standards Institute | |
| 6.1.4 | In Clause 6.1.4 A(3), which “risks and opportunities” is an organization required to plan actions to address? | An organization is not required to plan actions to address every risk and opportunity, only those it has determined need to be addressed. This determination is an output of Clause 6.1.1. An organization retains the authority and accountability to decide how it fulfils the requirements of ISO 14001, including determining which risks and opportunities need to be addressed. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2017 |
| 6.2 | Is it a non-conformance if an organization establishes environmental objectives but, at the time of the audit, none relate to an identified significant aspect? | No. Clause 6.2.1 requires that significant environmental aspects and compliance obligations be taken into account when establishing and reviewing environmental objectives. It also requires that risks and opportunities be considered. However, it does not explicitly require that there be an objective related to significant aspects, compliance obligations or risks and opportunities at all times. It is the intent of the standard that the organization be able to demonstrate that it has taken significant aspects and compliance obligations into account, and that it considers risks and opportunities in setting objectives. Over time, however, given the required commitment to continual improvement, it would be expected that there would be one or more objectives related to one or more significant | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | aspects, compliance obligations and risks and opportunities to demonstrate conformance to ISO 14001. | | |
| 6.2.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 5.2 | Must objectives be set which are explicitly related to the organization's commitment to environmental protection, including pollution prevention or are the scope and content of environmental objectives solely at the discretion of the organization? | <p>This question refers specifically to the setting of environmental objectives, which is covered by Section 6.2 of the standard.</p> <p>This question raises the issue that one cannot read a particular sentence or section of the ISO 14001 standard in isolation from the other sections of the standard. There is an interrelationship between the requirements in some sections with the requirements in other sections. This question deals with one of those interrelationships.</p> <p>Section 6.2 does not by itself require that the documented objectives explicitly mention environmental protection or prevention of pollution. However, Section 6.2 does require the organization to take into account its significant environmental aspects and associated compliance obligations when setting its objectives. It also clearly states that the objectives “shall be consistent” with the organization’s environmental policy.</p> <p>According to section 5.2 the environmental policy, which is set by top management and must be implemented and be made available to the public, must include commitments to the protection of the environment including prevention of pollution. Therefore, while organizations have the discretion to</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | <p>set their own objectives, they must do so within these parameters.</p> <p>In addition, setting environmental objectives is not the only way that an organization can support its commitment to environmental protection, including prevention of pollution. An organization can take action within the EMS related to competence, awareness, and communication (see clause 7, Support); operational planning and control, or emergency preparedness and response (see clause 8, Operation); or monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation (see clause 9, Performance Evaluation). Note: The above Q&A originally related to both compliance with regulatory requirements as well as prevention of pollution. The discussion on compliance with regulatory requirements has been moved to the subsequent Q&A 99-03.A1.</p> | | |
| 7.2 | Does ISO 14001 imply some consideration by the organization of legal requirements for training of employees in establishing competence and training? | ISO 14001 in Section 7.2 requires the determination of training needs associated with an organization's environmental aspects and its environmental management system. If an organization is legally required to provide certain kinds of training, such training should be identified as a "need." | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 7.5.1 | If a small business such as a fast food franchise, automotive dealership, flower shop, funeral home, grocery store, pizza shop, etc. - were to | ISO 14001 clause 7.5.1 requires an organization to include documented information required by the Standard, and any other documented information determined by the | ANSI - American National | 2019 |



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| | <p>adopt ISO 14001, what level of documentation should they provide to demonstrate conformity to ISO 14001?</p> | <p>organization as necessary for effectiveness of its EMS. The specific documentation required by the Standard is described within the applicable clauses of the Standard. For example, information about environmental aspects that must be documented is found in clause 6.1.2.</p> <p>The Standard recognizes that the extent of documented information can differ from one organization to another due to a number of reasons, including the size of the organization. For that reason, in some clauses of the Standard it provides flexibility for an organization to determine the extent of documented information required. In these specific cases, it is incumbent upon the organization to determine the level of documentation required to ensure its EMS is implemented as planned and determine the records necessary to provide objective evidence of conformance to ISO 14001 requirements. Regardless of size, an organization may determine it needs additional documents and records, over and above what is required by the Standard to ensure its EMS is effective.</p> <p>For ease in reference, the following lists provide the minimum documented information, either documents or records, that is required by ISO 14001 and the applicable clause that specifies the requirement. Where the Standard offers flexibility to the organization, the applicable text is noted in italics.</p> | Standards Institute | |



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| | | <p>An organization shall maintain documentation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — the scope of its EMS (see 4.3); — its environmental policy (see 5.2); — the process(es) needed to meet requirements of clause 6.1.1 through 6.1.4, to the extent necessary to have confidence they are carried out as planned (see 6.1.1); — the risks and opportunities that it determines need to be addressed (see 6.1.1); — environmental aspects and associated environmental impacts, criteria used to determine significant environmental aspects, and its significant environmental aspects (see 6.1.2); — its compliance obligations (see 6.1.3); — its environmental objectives (see 6.2.1); — the operational control processes needed to meet EMS requirements and to implement the actions identified in clause 6.1 and 6.2, to the extent necessary to have confidence the processes have been carried out as planned (see 8.1); — the process(es) needed to prepare for and respond to potential emergency situations, to the extent necessary to have confidence the process(es) is (are) carried out as planned (see 8.2). <p>An organization shall retain records as evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — competence, as appropriate (see 7.2); | | |



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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – communications, as appropriate (see 7.4.1); – monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation results, as appropriate (see 9.1.1); – compliance evaluation result(s) (see 9.1.2); – implementation of the audit program, and the audit results (see 9.2); – the results of management reviews (see 9.3); – the nature of identified nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken, and the results of any corrective action (see 10.2). | | |
| 7.5.3 | If a facility such as a bag house collecting hazardous materials is operated using the manufacturer's operations manual in lieu of the organization preparing its own internal manual or procedures, is the manufacturer's operations manual a document of external origin under clause 7.5.3? | Yes, unless the organization modifies that manual and makes it its own, in which case it becomes an internal document. As long as the organization is committed to using the manufacturer's manual including any subsequent updated version, then the manual is of external origin. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 7.5.3 | If a document of external origin is referenced in a document determined necessary by an organization for EMS planning or operational purposes, in what ways must such documents be identified and controlled? | This question refers specifically to the last paragraph of Section 7.5.3 which requires the organization to ensure “Documented information of external origin determined by the organization to be necessary for the planning and operation of the environmental management system shall be identified, as appropriate, and controlled”. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | <p>The standard does not specify (a) particular way(s) to identify documented information of external origin that is necessary or to control this information. It is up to the organization to define the process (or processes) it will use. The intent of the standard is that the organization considers and decides if any external documented information is necessary for the planning and operation of its EMS. If such documented information is identified by the organization, the process(es) established must ensure that the documented information that is necessary to the EMS is the correct information and is available to those who need it. It is not the intention to require identification and control of external documented information used only for reference purposes.</p> <p>The process(es) for identifying and controlling external documented information does not have to be the same process(es) used for internal documented information. The standard requires only the identification and control of distribution of documented information of external origin and does not require the same degree of control for such documented information as it does for internal documented information that are part of the EMS.</p> | | |
| 8.1 , 3.3.4 | ISO 14001 Clause 8.1 requires an organization to ensure that outsourced processes are controlled or influenced. The text in Annex section A.8.1 | ISO standards don't establish legal liability - they are voluntary and do not change legal obligations. This criterion in A.8.1 relates to the arrangement between the parties (see definition | ANSI - American National | 2019 |



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| | states that an outsourced process is one that fulfils a list of criteria, including “liability for conforming to requirements is retained by the organization;” which may allow exclusion of some procured services that meet the definition of outsourced processes in 3.3.4 from the “control or influence” requirement in 8.1. How is the phrase “liability for conforming to requirements” to be understood? Does this mean strict legal liability for compliance with environmental regulations, or something more? | <p>3.3.4) and whether or not the organization retains liability (i.e., responsibility) for conforming to requirements. These requirements may include but are not limited to legal requirements.</p> <p>Outsourced processes are a subset of procured services that meet the criteria of A.8.1. These criteria assist an organization in determining which of its procured services are outsourced processes. The organization defines in its EMS the type and extent of control or influence to be applied to the outsourced process.</p> | Standards Institute | |
| 8.1 | What is an outsourced process? Is every process or service obtained from an external provider an outsourced process? | <p>ISO 14001:2015 defines “outsource” as “make an arrangement where an external organization performs part of an organization’s function or process” (see Clause 3.3.4). A process or service obtained from an external provider is not necessarily an outsourced process. Outsourced processes can be viewed as a subset of these externally provided processes or services.</p> <p>Criteria that an organization can use to distinguish outsourced processes from other processes and services are described in Annex A.8.1, which states that an outsourced process is one that fulfils all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it is within the scope of the environmental management system; – it is integral to the organization’s functioning; | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2017 |



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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – it is needed for the environmental management system to achieve its intended outcome; – liability for conforming to requirements is retained by the organization; – the organization and the external provider have a relationship where the process is perceived by interested parties as being carried out by the organization. | | |
| 8.1 | <p>If an organization does not have any outsourced processes, to what extent does clause 8.1 apply? Do the requirements in the paragraph starting “consistent with a life cycle perspective” only apply to outsourced processes?</p> | <p>If an organization has no outsourced processes, the only requirements of Clause 8.1 that are not applicable to its EMS are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The org shall ensure that outsourced processes are controlled or influenced. – The type and extent of control or influence to be applied to the processes shall be defined within the environmental management system. <p>All of the other requirements in 8.1 are independent of whether a process is outsourced or not, including the requirements in the paragraph starting with ‘Consistent with a life cycle perspective...’</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2017 |
| 8.1 | <p>Does the phrase, “consistent with a life cycle perspective’ in Clause 8.1, Operational Planning and Control mean that an organization needs to consider a life cycle perspective a second time, with regard to operational planning and control?</p> | <p>There is no requirement in Clause 8.1 that the organization undergo an activity to reconsider a life cycle perspective. There is also no requirement for a formal life cycle assessment (see COI 16-01.A1). The four bullets in Clause 8.1 paragraph 4, a) to d) specify requirements that are typically associated with specific life cycle stages.</p> | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2017 |



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| 8.1 | The operational control clause of ISO 14001:2004 (Clause 4.4.6) referred to identifying and planning those operations associated with significant environmental aspects. The operational planning and control clause of ISO 14001:2015 (Clause 8.1) refers to processes needed to meet environmental management system requirements. Does the revised standard still refer to control of the organization’s operational processes? | As was the case in ISO 14001:2004 Clause 4.4.6, Clause 8.1 in the revised standard remains focused on planning and controlling the operations of an organization. The organization decides the controls needed for operational processes associated with its significant environmental aspects, compliance obligations, risks and opportunities that need to be addressed, and environmental objectives. These operational processes are controlled by establishing operating criteria and implementing methods to meet the criteria. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2017 |
| 8.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.2 | Company A out-sources part of their production operations (e.g., parts metal coating or painting) to Company B. Company B is a separate company located in a different city/state/country. Is Company B considered “persons doing work under” Company A’s control? If so, what does ISO 14001 require Company A to do regarding ensuring the competence of Company B? What does ISO 14001 require Company A to do regarding identifying training needs for Company B employees? | This question arises from the phrase “persons doing work under its control.” This phrase, appears in four places in the normative clauses of ISO 14001: 1. the organization must determine the necessary competence of persons doing work under its control that affects its environmental performance and its ability to fulfil its compliance obligations, and ensure that these persons are competent on the basis of appropriate education, training or experience, (Section 7.2, a-b) , and 2. persons doing work under the organization’s control must be made aware of certain key provisions of its EMS (Section 7.3, a-d). 3. the organization must ensure its communication process(es) enable(s) persons doing work under the organization’s control to contribute to continual improvement (Section 7.4.2, b). | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |



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| | | <p>4. the organization must provide relevant information and training related to emergency preparedness and response, as appropriate, to relevant interested parties, including persons working under its control (Section 8.2, f).</p> <p>The phrase “doing work under the organization’s control” is not defined in ISO 14001. The organization implementing the EMS determines who those persons are, based on the activities, products, and services within the scope of the EMS established by the organization. The overall intent of the phrase is to ensure the organization looks beyond its direct employees and considers other persons performing tasks within that scope when addressing competence and awareness requirements. The use of this phrase is not intended to change any legal relationship between the organization and any individual.</p> <p>The phrase clearly covers an organization’s own employees, including contract and temporary employees. It also could apply to individual contractors, or individuals employed by contractors working for the organization or other suppliers of goods or services if those individuals are engaged in tasks within the scope of the organization’s EMS. Persons covered by this phrase will be determined by the organization on a case-by-case basis.</p> | | |



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| | | <p>The requirements for ensuring competence, awareness, its internal communication process, and information or training on emergency preparedness and response in key EMS provisions apply to all persons performing tasks for or on behalf of the organization within its EMS scope. The requirements related to competency, however, apply only to a subset of such persons: those performing tasks which can affect its environmental performance and its ability to fulfil its compliance obligations. For these persons, Section 7.2 requires that the organization ensure that they are competent (based on education, training or experience).</p> <p>Section 7.2 also requires an organization to identify training needs associated with its environmental aspects and its EMS. Although it does not explicitly require identifying training needs of persons who work “on its behalf”, such persons would be included if the tasks they perform are identified as requiring training. This section does not require the organization to provide training to such persons, but it does require that needs for training be identified and met. ISO 14001 does not specify the method or processes that an organization must use to satisfy any of the requirements of Section 7.2.</p> <p>In the example given in the question, Company A would need to determine whether there are any tasks being performed by</p> | | |



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| | | <p>persons within Company B that are related to Company A’s environmental aspects of activities, products or services within its EMS scope. If so, Company A would need to implement some mechanism(s) to make them aware of the particular EMS requirements related to these particular tasks (see Section 7.3 a-d). Company A also would need to determine if there are any tasks that can affect its environmental performance or ability to fulfill its compliance obligation, or, are related to emergency preparedness and response being performed by persons within Company B. If so, Company A would be required to establish some means of ensuring that those persons are competent to perform those tasks. ISO 14001 does not specify how this should be done. Company A has the discretion to establish a process that best suits its needs.</p> <p>If the identification of persons doing work under the organization’s control raises questions of potential legal liability, those should be addressed by the organization’s legal counsel.</p> | | |
| 8.2 | 8.2 e) requires the organization to review “and” revise the process(es) and planned response actions. Here, the word “shall” apply to both verbs (organization SHALL review... / organization SHALL revise...). Is an organization ALWAYS required to “revise” the process(es) ? | If the periodical review shows that the process(es) and planned response actions has(have) no trouble/problem AT ALL, then the revision may not be necessary. However, please also keep in mind that such situation is unlikely to happen, because this clause is defining a particular case like “the occurrence of emergency situations or tests”. | JISC - Japanese Industrial Standards Committee | 2018 |



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| | | <p>Therefore, if we want to be exact to the grammatical meaning keeping in mind that there “may” be a case where no revision would be needed at all (which seldom happens), the word “where necessary” could be added in the sentence as follows:</p> <p>e) periodically review, <u>and where necessary</u>, revise the process(es) and planned response actions, in particular after the occurrence of emergency situations or tests;</p> | | |
| 9.1.2 | <p>Is the intent of the requirement in clause 9.1.2, "Evaluation of Compliance" that only those working for on or behalf of the organization conduct the evaluation(s) of compliance, or can these evaluations include those conducted by regulatory authorities?</p> | <p>The intent of Clause 9.1.2 is that an organization will determine how it will periodically evaluate compliance, and can choose to include evaluations conducted by internal staff, consultants, and/or regulatory agencies. An organization can use information from regulatory agency audits/inspections as part of its compliance evaluation process, but cannot rely on such audits/inspections alone.</p> <p>Periodic compliance assessments performed on a sampling basis (for example, those conducted internally, by consultants, and/or by regulatory agencies) may satisfy the requirement of clause 9.1.2 if, taken together, they cover all applicable legal requirements over a period defined by the organization.</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | 2019 |



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| 9.1.2 | Is there an expectation in ISO 14001 that compliance with ALL applicable compliance obligations will be assessed for ALL environmental media over some time frame (e.g., every 3-5 years), or are periodic compliance assessments on a sampling basis (selected based on the environmental importance of activities, history of noncompliance, and other factors) considered adequate? | ISO 14001 requires the organization to evaluate the fulfilment of its compliance obligations (Clause 9.1.2). It does not specify a particular methodology or frequency for doing so. Periodic compliance assessments performed on a sampling basis may satisfy this requirement if, taken together, they cover all applicable compliance obligations over a period defined by the organization. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 9.2 | Can a recently hired environmental manager be considered objective and impartial in conducting an internal audit of the organization's EMS, considering that it was developed and maintained by their predecessor? | <p>Yes, an internal auditor is considered objective and impartial providing they can demonstrate freedom from responsibility for the activity being audited, or freedom from bias and conflict of interest, consistent with ISO 14001 definition 3.4.1 audit, Note 3 to entry.</p> <p>Clarification provided in ISO 14001:2015 Annex A.9.2 states that auditors "should be independent of the activity being audited, wherever practicable, and should in all cases act in a manner that is free from bias and conflict of interest." Further guidance in ISO 14004:2016 Clause 9.2 states that internal audits "should be planned and conducted by an objective and impartial auditor or audit team... selected from within the organization or from external sources."</p> <p>In addition, ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems, Clause 4e) describes independence as the basis for the</p> | ANSI | 2024 |



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| | | <p>impartiality of the audit and objectivity of the audit conclusions, and notes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “For internal audits, auditors should be independent from the function being audited if practicable. Auditors should maintain objectivity throughout the audit process to ensure that the audit findings and conclusions are based only on the audit evidence;” and - “For small organizations, it may not be possible for internal auditors to be fully independent of the activity being audited, but every effort should be made to remove bias and encourage objectivity.” | | |
| 9.2, 7.2 | <p>Does the standard require companies to select internal auditors who are Certified Environmental Engineers, have a background in Environmental Management Programs, or have previous work experience in the environmental field? Based on section 9.2 of ISO 14001, "Select auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process." I believe that I can use personnel who are trained in conducting audits regardless of their Environmental work experience. I believe that in order to ensure objectivity and impartiality, the internal auditor should be independent of the Environmental group. I also believe that with proper training/education,</p> | <p>ISO14001 does not contain specific requirements on certification, education, or work experience for internal auditors or any other position. Clause 7.2 on Competence, requires an organization to “determine the necessary competence of persons doing work under its control that affects its environmental performance...”; “ensure that these persons are competent on the basis of appropriate education, training or experience”, “where applicable, take actions to acquire the necessary competence, and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken”; and, “retain appropriate documentation as evidence of competence”. These actions can include the provision of training, mentoring, reassignment and hiring or contracting competent persons. Thus, it is the intent of ISO 14001 that the organization decides what education, training or</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | 2019 |



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| | that the QMS internal audit team can audit the EMS program. Can you provide some clarification on this point? | <p>experience, including certifications, is appropriate for its internal auditors.</p> <p>Note: Although not required by ISO 14001, guidance on selection and competence of internal auditors can be found in ISO 19011.</p> | | |
| 9.2 | If work is performed on multiple shifts that 8.1 Operational planning and control is required, or 8.2 Emergency preparedness and response may be necessary, does 9.2 Internal audit require that all shifts be included in the organization's internal audits? | ISO 14001 contains no specific requirement to conduct an internal audit of all shifts. The organization must decide on the appropriate scope of its internal audits to meet the requirements of clause 9.2.2 and its own needs for audit information. For additional clarification, refer to COI 02-03.A2 on the topic of internal auditing. | ANSI - American National Standards Institute | 2019 |
| 9.2 | Does the requirement for internal audit (9.2) include a compliance or financial audit? | <p>No.</p> <p>The internal audit provides information about whether the EMS conforms to the requirements of the Standard and the organization's own requirements for its EMS (9.2.1). The organization determines which requirements beyond those of the Standard itself are EMS requirements, and will thus be included in the scope of the internal audit. The internal audit is not a financial audit, a compliance audit, or an audit of conformity with interested parties' needs and expectations. The Standard's new definition of nonconformity (3.4.3) clarifies this by stating in Note 1 to Entry that nonconformity does not mean non-fulfilment of any and all requirements, it only means</p> | SCC - Standards Council of Canada | 2017 |



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| | | <p>non-fulfilment of the requirements of the Standard and additional EMS requirements the organization establishes for itself. There is no change from the previous edition of the Standard in this respect.</p> | | |
| 9.2.2 | <p>Does ISO 14001 section 9.2 require that the organization conduct its internal EMS audit on an annual basis?</p> | <p>No. Section 9.2.2 requires an organization to establish the frequency of its environmental management system audits. Since the "frequency" is not defined by ISO 14001, these audits may or may not be conducted on an annual basis.</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | 2019 |
| 9.2.2 | <p>Does ISO 14001 section 9.2 require that the organization conduct its internal EMS audit on an annual basis covering all elements (i.e. full scope) of the ISO 14001 standard?</p> | <p>This question is in two parts. The first part asks whether ISO 14001 requires an annual audit. See the response to 02-03.A1 for the answer to that question.</p> <p>The second part asks whether an internal EMS audit must cover all elements of ISO 14001 during the audit. The environmental management system audit program takes into consideration the environmental importance of the process concerned, changes affecting the organization, and the results of previous audits. According to ISO 14001, in order to be comprehensive, the audit program shall cover the audit criteria, scope, frequency and methods, as well as the responsibilities and requirements for planning and conducting audits, reporting results, and retaining associated documented information. ISO 14001 does not</p> | <p>ANSI - American National Standards Institute</p> | 2019 |



| Clause in ISO 14001 | Question | Response | NSB | Year reviewed by SC 1 plenary |
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| | | <p>require that all elements of ISO 14001 be audited each and every time an audit is conducted, nor does it require that every single element be audited within a one-year period but rather that the program shall be established with consideration of the various factors described above.</p> <p>In addition, in determining its environmental management system audit program, the organization should consider the purpose of the audit, i.e., to determine whether or not the environmental management system conforms to 1) the organization's own requirements for its environmental management system; 2) the requirements of this International Standard, and whether or not the environmental management system has been effectively implemented and maintained. These factors should be considered by the organization in determining the necessity for auditing each element of ISO 14001 and at what frequency, e.g., (a) annually, or (b) each and every time an audit is conducted, or (c) over a period that exceeds one year.</p> | | |
| 9.3 | The final part of clause 9.3 refers to "outputs" in the sentence: "The outputs of the management review shall include:" but "results" in: "The organization shall retain documented information | <p>Yes, the terms "outputs" and "results" in clause 9.3 refer to the same thing.</p> <p>ISO 14001 clause 3.3.5 defines a "process" as a "set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs</p> | BSI | 2022 |



| Clause in ISO 14001 | Question | Response | NSB | Year reviewed by SC 1 plenary |
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| | <p>as evidence of the results of management reviews.”.</p> <p>Should users of the standard interpret the terms “outputs” and “results” to refer to the same thing (i.e. all outputs should be documented)?</p> | <p>into outputs”. The management review process produces outputs that are the basis for top management conclusions, decisions, actions, identification of opportunities for improvement, and potential changes to the organization’s EMS and strategy. These outputs can be considered as the results of the management review process and shall be documented by an organization.</p> <p>The results of the management review process shall enable top management to measure and judge the organization's EMS effectiveness (clause 3.4.6) and performance (clause 3.4.10), and make changes as necessary.</p> <p>In its latest revision, Annex SL has changed “outputs” to “results” to avoid confusion.</p> | | |
| 9.3 | <p>What is intended to be provided in the documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews; should it only apply to the outputs of the management review? This is as opposed to embracing evidence of the consideration of sub-clauses 9.3 a) – g) and a summary of the discussions arising from these considerations, as well as the outputs.</p> | <p>Clause 9.3 only requires documentation of the outputs of the management review. However the items a) – g) may have documentation requirements specified elsewhere in the other clauses of ISO 14001. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 9.1.1 requires the organization to retain appropriate documentation as evidence of monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation results. – 9.2.2 requires the organization to retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results. | BSI | 2022 |



| Clause in ISO 14001 | Question | Response | NSB | Year reviewed by SC 1 plenary |
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| | | <p>Further, ISO 14001 clause 7.5.1 requires that the organization determines the documented information being necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of the environmental management system including its processes. The extent of documented information to evidence the management review process can hence differ from one organization to another.</p> <p>Documented information that an organization may want to retain as evidence can include the items for consideration from clause 9.3 a) – g) in the form of records of meeting agenda items, attendees, presentation materials, and reports or meeting minutes that record management decisions, or any other/additional format that an organization deems feasible to demonstrate conformity with the International Standard.</p> | | |

Note: the questions and their responses above are provided in response to questions related to ISO 14001:2015. One should not infer that these responses are valid with regard to the 2004 version of ISO 14001.