



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

COUNTERING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19
WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

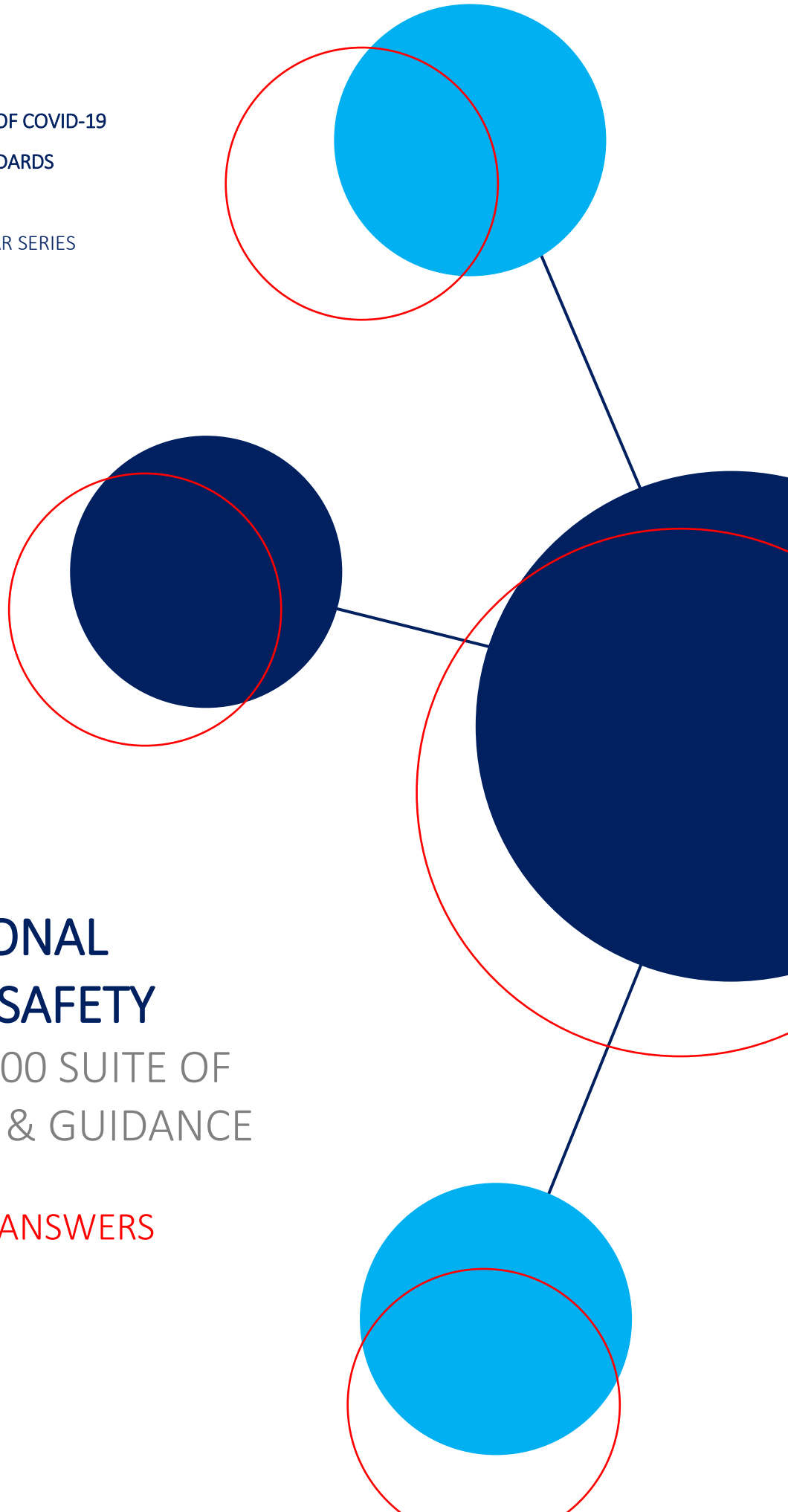
ISO/UNIDO SPECIAL WEBINAR SERIES

WEBINAR

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

THE ISO 45000 SUITE OF
STANDARDS & GUIDANCE

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



CONTEXT

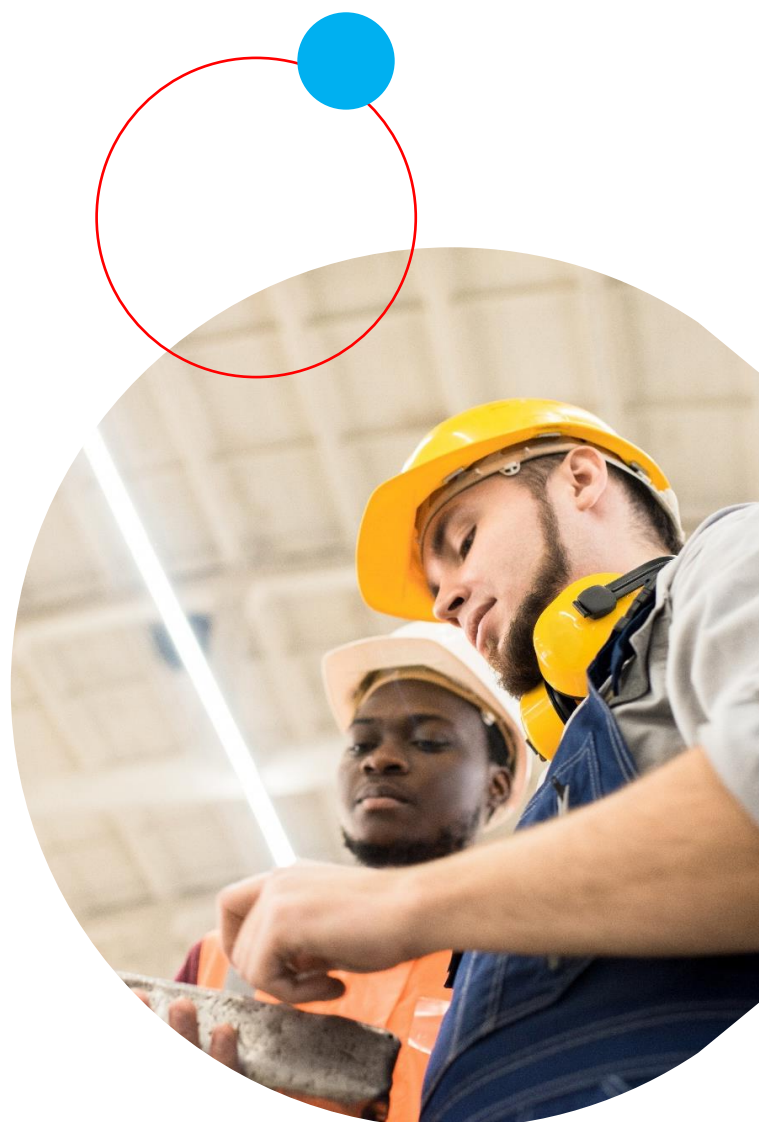
The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant global public health, social and economic challenges. Hence, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) have teamed up to organize a special webinar series on the relevance of international standards in the light of the global health crisis. The virtual events discuss the importance of international standards and conformity assessment in mitigating the negative effects of COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

ISO 45001, the first ISO standard on Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Management was published in 2018. Since then, the ISO Technical Committee responsible for the standard has been developing supporting guidance in areas including the management of psychological health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace.

The webinar, held on 18 June 2020, describes the committee's activities and the current and planned deliverables. It highlights aspects of this work most relevant to the fight against Covid-19 and explains how the ISO 45001 framework can help organizations to adapt their OH&S arrangements to address the risks of transmission of the virus amongst workers.

Watch the recorded webinar [here](#)



ISO 45001 - GENERAL QUESTIONS

ISO 45001 is good, but its enforcement is very important, so how is ISO/TC 283 helping to enforce it?

For most organizations the application of ISO 45001, and the decision as to whether to seek certification, is a voluntary one, though in some specific situations the provisions of the standard may be included or referenced in legislation, or compliance with the standard may be a contractual requirement for the organization. It follows that “enforcement” often falls purely to the organization itself, or there may be a need to demonstrate conformance to a regulator, a certification body, or a client.

ISO/TC 283 is therefore not directly involved in processes to enforce application of the standard, or processes to assess compliance. Our role is to help ensure that the requirements of the standard are clear and can be easily understood, and to provide guidance on their interpretation and application. To do this we gather feedback from stakeholders, through national standards bodies and their mirror committees, and through public consultation. This includes providing answers to frequently asked questions via the committee website <https://committee.iso.org/home/tc283>.

What if the top management of an organization fails to take the lead in terms of providing an opportunity for worker participation?

Participation and consultation of workers is a requirement of ISO 45001, therefore top management must ensure that this takes place and the related requirements on communication are also complied with, if they wish to claim compliance with ISO 45001 as a whole.

How can an autocratic leadership style in an organization be overcome/handled while

implementing the worker participation aspect of the standard? This has been a challenge in some of the ISO 45001 implementation projects as leadership commitment is key to realizing full conformity to the standard requirements.

As noted in the question, leadership commitment is very important to ensuring success in managing OH&S risks and is a requirement in ISO 45001. Workers responsible for OH&S management can help develop leadership support by demonstrating the benefits of improving OH&S performance to overall business objectives (e.g. less sickness absence, less operational disruption due to accidents, less chance of litigation against the organization). If those responsible for OH&S ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of OH&S performance, it may be possible to demonstrate to leaders that workers' performance improves in those situations where workers are involved in making decisions and understand why rules or processes are in place. This can be done through limited interventions on specific issues. For example, team leaders could discuss with workers ideas of how to reduce the number of incidents relating to a particular hazard that affects them directly, getting agreement on the best way to manage that risk, then feeding back to leaders on the effectiveness of this approach when compared with a traditional approach of imposing controls without consultation.

In regards to Clause 6.1.2.3 Assessment of OH&S opportunities and other opportunities for the OH&S management system, should this be conducted alongside or separate from the HIRA?

The identification, and assessment, of OH&S opportunities and other opportunities for the OH&S management system, can be carried out alongside, or separate from, the hazard and risk assessment (HIRA). Certainly, HIRA can be used to identify some opportunities, however additional assessment may be needed to

ensure that opportunities are not missed if identification is too narrowly focussed via HIRA.

When an organization implements ISO 45001, should they analyse the psychosocial risks, or should this be done only when implementing ISO 45003?

ISO 45001 requires the organization to identify and assess all OH&S risks to workers, so this already includes psychosocial risks. ISO 45003 is being developed to provide additional guidance on this aspect, as it is one which many organizations have limited experience with, yet one which is becoming increasingly significant for many.

Are responsiveness and timeliness during emergencies and times of crisis sufficiently addressed in ISO 45001?

ISO 45001 contains a section specific to emergency preparedness and response. Although there is no specific mention of timeliness, the organization is required to test its plans periodically and to evaluate their effectiveness via these tests and any actual emergencies. Timeliness is clearly an important attribute when considering whether an emergency plan is effective, so it should always form part of such an evaluation.

Can ISO 45001 be used to address and manage the human factors?

Yes, human factors are among the factors affecting OH&S risks to workers. The organization should therefore consider human factors within the scope of its OH&S management system and use the ISO 45001 framework in addressing and managing the related risks.

Why is "worker participation" grouped together with "leadership" in the PDCA cycle?

It is important to note that each requirement in ISO 45001 is independent and that the organization needs to comply with all requirements, regardless of the order in which they appear or how they are grouped together. There is no particular significance to the fact that these are grouped together within the document, other than because of the interaction between the two clauses: effectively meeting the requirements for leadership depends on meeting the requirements for worker participation and vice versa. Additionally, ISO 45001 uses the same clause structure as other management system standards such as ISO 9001 (Quality Management) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management); putting the requirements for worker participation alongside those for leadership helps preserve that common structure, and is a useful reminder that together these elements are enablers of effective OH&S management.

Could you please explain in more detail about non-routine operation in order to address the risks and opportunities? Do we have to add the grading system for the risks and the opportunities that we have addressed?

Please see the questions and answers on this topic on the TC 283 website—<https://committee.iso.org/home/tc283>— in the Frequently Asked Questions section, in the area related to Clause 6 of the standard. Establishing (grading) the magnitude of risks, taking into account the controls in place, is key to establishing whether controls are sufficient or whether action is needed; this applies equally to routine and non-routine operations.

In the case of non-routine activities, workers have to be trained in changes incorporated in the infrastructure, equipment, materials, and physical conditions of the workplace, and hazards arising from these changes. If the situation persists for a longer period, should this non-routine activity be considered as having become a routine activity?

Yes, some non-routine can become routine activities over time. For example, some of the changes that organizations have introduced to address the Covid-19 pandemic may become permanent, and this should be reflected in training, process documentation, etc. It's important that when we adjust work and workplaces (in this case to reduce the risks of transmission of the virus) that we assess how changes affect the risks for regular (routine) activities, but also consider more occasional (non-routine) activities such as maintenance activities on equipment or buildings, and that we consider emergency arrangements such as evacuation to an assembly point.

Can a company be certified as complying to the ISO 45001 standard?

ISO 45001 can be used as the basis for a self-declaration of conformity by an organization, for a "second party" assessment of an organization by a client, or for external, independent third-party certification. Independent third-party certification of a management system is voluntary, in other words a choice on the part of the organization itself. That said, there are occasions where requirements for certification are applied in supply chains where a client organization requires its suppliers to be certified – this is currently less common with ISO 45001 than, for example, with ISO 9001 (Quality Management). The credibility of any independent third-party certification, is influenced by the choice of certification body. National Accreditation Councils provide oversight of management system certification bodies ("certifiers" or, in some countries "registrars"), reviewing aspects of their work including competence and impartiality, but this accreditation is voluntary on the part of certifiers. We would recommend organizations employ a certifier accredited for ISO 45001.

What is meant by "harassment" from the point of view of ISO 45001?

By harassment ISO 45001 is referring to aggressive pressure, intimidation or bullying including behaviour that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person.

Can you please share the significant differences between ISO 45001 and OHSAS 18001?

Principal differences between the requirements of ISO 45001 and those of OSHAS 18001 are summarised in a PowerPoint presentation available on the ISO/TC 283 website <https://committee.iso.org/home/tc283>

These differences include: alignment to the structure and core requirements of other ISO management system standards (e.g. ISO 9001); more emphasis on the context of the organization, leadership and worker participation and consultation.

ISO 45001 IMPLEMENTATION HANDBOOK FOR SMALL ORGANIZATIONS

What is the Handbook? Does the Handbook provide guidance to small organizations in applying the requirements of ISO 45001: 2018?

Yes, the Handbook is a guidance document explaining how smaller organizations can implement the requirements of ISO 45001. It has deliberately been written in a less formal style and provides practical examples, to help organizations that do not have in-house OH&S specialists. It has been developed to support ISO 45001, not to replace it, although organizations beginning their journey in OH&S management could choose to use the Handbook as a starting point for developing an OH&S management system, rather than trying to comply to ISO 45001 from the outset.

When will the Handbook be published?

Publication is planned for early August 2020

Where will I be able to get it?

ISO will make the Handbook available to all national standards bodies. It is up to each individual standards body if this is made available through the national standards body. The handbook will always be available from ISO directly if a national standards body decides not to adopt it. The Handbook is currently being translated into a number of different languages and national standards bodies will be able to translate it into their own language should they choose to.

Has a draft of the guide been made available for smaller organizations?

Drafts were not made available to users due to the speed the Handbook was developed and to ensure that anything made publicly available was sufficiently developed to provide accurate advice, properly aligned to ISO 45001.

ISO 45003 - GENERAL QUESTIONS

Will we need special skills to perform risk assessment for these psychological needs?

ISO 45003 provides practical guidance, with many examples, to help non-specialist workers assess psychosocial risks effectively. Specialised training/skills can be useful to assess risks and manage psychological health, but it is recognised that this is not always an option, so these guidelines aim to assist all organizations even where there is no specialist knowledge.

Will emotional stress be addressed in ISO 45003? Does ISO 45003 address post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

ISO 45003 addresses all types of psychosocial risks, including different types of stress. It does not include specific guidance on PTSD.

How can an organization deal with workers with underlying conditions while respecting their privacy without compromising the law, for example, HIPAA in the US?

Legislation and regulation always take precedence over requirements in standards, therefore these must always be considered first. When supporting a worker with underlying conditions, the organization should consult with the worker on any personal information to be accessed and retained by the organization and why this is needed. Additionally, the organization should make clear how that data will be processed, how access will be controlled, and how confidentiality will be maintained. Where possible such information should be anonymized.

What is the modality of performing audits of ISO 45003?

ISO 45003 contains guidance, rather than requirements, therefore it is not a standard designed for separate audit. However, this guidance can be used as a basis for assessing how psychosocial risks are being managed within an overall OH&S management system, for example as part of an ISO 45001 audit.

When an organization implements ISO 45001, should they analyse the psychosocial risks, or should this be done only when implementing ISO 45003?

ISO 45001 requires the organization to identify and assess OH&S risks to its workers, so this already includes psychosocial risks. ISO 45003 provides additional guidance on this aspect of OH&S as it is a subject many organizations have limited knowledge of and lack the competence to manage the risks effectively, yet it is also becoming increasingly significant for many.

[Is it possible to add a chapter in ISO 45003, including tips on how to raise awareness about psychological risks in the work place in developing countries, where mental health is still highly neglected?](#)

ISO 45003 provides tips on raising awareness of psychosocial risks for any organization in any setting - mental health is neglected in many countries, not just in the developing world, so the guidelines address this as widely as possible. ISO/TC 283 is also exploring the particular needs of developing countries, however, through the establishment of a new developing countries coordination group, so if further specific guidance is deemed useful we can consider developing something at a later date.

[Most of the psychosocial risks in an organization are managed by the Human Resource department through their Health and Wellness programmes. However, the organizations do not want to classify these risks as occupational risks. How does one educate the organization that psychosocial risks are occupational in nature?](#)

One of the reasons we are developing ISO 45003 is to help promote recognition of the importance of psychosocial risks in the workplace, and that organizations need to manage these risks effectively. Indeed, the ballot of National Standards Bodies which approved the proposal to develop ISO 45003 was itself a strong indication of the growing international recognition of the importance of the issue.

At one level it doesn't matter which function in the organization holds this responsibility, if the way these risks are managed properly recognises and addresses the sources of psychosocial risks in the workplace, including from the way work is organised. In other words, the approach needs to include adapting work to address the needs of workers, not focus exclusively on adapting workers to the work. ISO 45003 can therefore be used by those in an HR role as well as those in dedicated OH&S roles and ideally in organizations where both of these functions exist management of psychosocial risks will be done through the two departments working together.

[Can an organization certify to ISO 45003?](#)

No. ISO 45003 is a guidance standard and should be used together with ISO 45001. Therefore certification to ISO 45001 should include assessment of how the organization is managing psychosocial risks within its overall OH&S management system. Certification bodies may choose to use ISO 45003 guidance to determine how this aspect of OH&S is audited within ISO 45001.

[What are the possible indicators of an organization effectively implementing programmes to address psychosocial risks?](#)

ISO/TC 283 is about to begin work on guidance for organizations to evaluate OH&S performance and this will include consideration of psychosocial risks. General indications of effective management of psychosocial risk can include reduced sickness absence due to stress or burn out, improved staff engagement, reduction of incidences of bullying and internal grievances, reduction of incidences of muscular skeletal disorders (MSDs).

[Another real concern is when employees from ethnic minorities \(for example, during a very politically charged US election year\) fear backlash from their employers for expressing](#)

[their opinions on social media, etc. Any thoughts on how ISO 45001/3 can help develop systems to manage this?](#)

This is a complex issue which extends into issues beyond OH&S. ISO 45001/3 can realistically only contribute rather peripherally to the resolution of such challenges. But OH&S can be an area in which the mutual benefits of consultation and collaboration help build relationships, dialogue, and understanding, which may ultimately have spin-off benefits for wider employer/employee relations.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

[How effectively can employers deal with COVID-19 stigmatization in the workplace?](#)

To manage the risks related to COVID-19 leaders should encourage a culture of transparency and support, emphasising that this disease is easily contracted and spread and therefore no-one should be judged or treated unfairly for becoming ill. It is important that leaders reinforce the importance of prompt reporting to protect everyone's health and safety. This includes encouraging workers to report if they develop symptoms, if they have been advised to self-isolate and if they feel they are being treated unfairly in relation to COVID-19 – paying particular attention to when a worker returns to work after being ill. Any instances of stigmatization or harassment should be treated in the same way as any other inappropriate behaviour.

[How has the context of safety in the food and beverage industries changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic?](#)

The pandemic has affected OH&S in different parts of the food and beverage sector in many ways. This sector covers everything from the growing of food, to food production,

distribution and the retail and hospitality sectors. So, providing just a few examples, from what is a very complex picture:

- Some parts of the sector have seen increased demand, in parallel with higher than normal levels of worker absence (due to the virus) placing additional demands on remaining workers.
- The ability of the virus to survive for extended periods in the chilled environment of some food processing plants is a particular challenge and is leading to some workplace clusters of new infections. This means particular care should be taken in these settings to protect workers, by implementing additional safety measures, including addressing ventilation systems (recycled air is a particular hazard) and physical distancing between workers.
- In the retail and hospitality sectors physical distancing between workers and customers requires customer numbers to be restricted, enhanced cleaning regimes, and physical adjustments to some premises.

[What is your opinion of the promotion of COVID-free certifications or secure site by certification bodies and not of ISO 45001?](#)

It is difficult to make a general comment when there are a variety of COVID-related schemes under development. As with any certification it is important to be clear what the scope and/or limitations of any certification are, and to understand the competence and impartiality of the certification, before determining what reliance to place upon it.

Some of the schemes that have recently been developed to address COVID-19 are specific to compliance with national COVID-related guidance to businesses concerning the re-configuration of work places and work activities. These schemes will be vulnerable to any potentially rapid changes to the guidance as national situation evolves and/or local lockdowns occur. With their focus specifically on compliance with national COVID-related guidance, these schemes typically do not consider the impact of any re-configuration of

work places and work activities on hazards and risks other than the transmission of the virus, so from a worker OH&S perspective they address only one aspect of workers' risk exposure.

Conversely, compliance with ISO 45001 demonstrates the existence and functioning of an overall OH&S management system, but existing certification does not of itself indicate whether the organization has implemented national COVID-related guidance.

I come from a country that is not well prepared to combat the pandemic effectively due to numerous challenges such as: politico-economic and socio-cultural problems, very loose regulatory measures, and also the degree to which workers in some industries observe OH&S measures. Based on this, what is the key thing to help address the problem, and how can implementation be undertaken to proactively respond to it?

Many organizations have been unprepared for the effect of the pandemic on their operations. Effective communication and a good level of understanding is critical for organizations with challenges such as you describe. Worker participation, as required in ISO 45001, will be a key factor in how effectively such organizations are able to manage the risks related to the pandemic. Workers should be fully informed on the facts about the potential seriousness of the virus, how it is transmitted and key basic measures for reducing that risk—such as physical distancing, frequent hand washing and enhanced hygiene in the workplace. By beginning with good information sharing, organizations can then agree with workers the best way for operations to take place and what measures can be taken to protect each other. It can be useful to ask simple questions such as: is this work activity essential? Can it be done safely by ensuring physical distancing of workers and anyone they interact with, e.g. customers? Can other measures make an essential activity safer (e.g. working remotely, wearing masks, working in the open air, establishing partnerships or small teams so workers are exposed to a limited

number of other people, changing when a work is done so fewer people are working at the same time). Working with experts from different sectors BSI has produced guidance which can be downloaded from the BSI website: <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/topics/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-guidelines/>. ISO/TC 283 is proposing to undertake work to develop these guidelines into an ISO standard shortly.

With more and more organizations placing bans on outside visitors to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread, is there any guidance on how certification bodies should plan to cover processes with OH&S risks on-site?

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) provides guidance to accreditors and accredited certification bodies. IAF has provided guidance to help address the challenges presented by the pandemic, including on the issue of access to workplaces. See in particular the FAQs in relation to COVID-19: https://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_COVID19_FAQs/638

Do you consider the COVID-19 pandemic as the new normal and a routine activity rather than an abnormal activity?

Some of the changes that organizations have introduced to address the COVID-19 pandemic may indeed become permanent changes, and this should be reflected in training, process documentation, etc. Scientific advice suggests that pandemics are likely to become more frequent, meaning that some of the ways of working we establish now may become more permanent, or be more regularly deployed for periods of time. Hence some things we have previously considered as abnormal may become routine and vice versa, and organizations will need to update their OH&S management systems to reflect this, as risks and opportunities may change. Making a routine activity non-routine may, for example,

increase the risk, if workers rarely undertake it and become unfamiliar with the requirements, in which case additional controls may be required.

The pandemic is a 'force majeure' situation with no clear orientation yet on its future (remedy). How can organizations ensure its consideration within their upcoming activity plans despite this uncertainty?

ISO 45001 requires an organization to review and update its plans and priorities at appropriate intervals. Where situations are evolving rapidly or there are significant uncertainties it is necessary to carry out such reviews more frequently, and to consider the effect of the uncertainties on the organization's OH&S objectives and its ability to achieve them. Planning long-term strategies to manage risks related to pandemics should be built into the OH&S management system; measures that can be effectively sustained beyond the immediate crisis will help organizations to manage both ongoing changes and future emergencies.

If a plant is closed due to positive cases of COVID-19, what should it consider in terms of health and safety before reopening?

The BSI safe working guidelines document, available at <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/topics/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-guidelines/> addresses the reopening of facilities in general, whether operation has been suspended due to positive cases of COVID-19 or other reasons, and provides much useful detail to supplement the following overview.

Where there has been a positive case of COVID-19 the organization will need to consider whether the evidence suggests that transmission occurred within the workplace, and if so, what changes could reduce further risk. This could involve changes to the physical configuration of the workplace (e.g. installation of screens or increased separation between

workstations) or changes to working arrangements including the number of people present in a given area at one time. If changes do result, the organization will need to communicate these to returning workers ahead of, or at the point of, return. It will also need to have considered whether/how these changes affect other OH&S risks to workers, and whether any changes to risk controls are needed.

The organization will also need to arrange cleaning of potentially affected areas of the plant, and consider any maintenance needed to building systems, such as water supply pipes and ventilation/air conditioning equipment.

ISO 45001 seems to address the pandemic, but we know the pandemic will not last forever. What is the way forward for the standard once the pandemic is over?

The requirements of ISO 45001 and the guidance documents that support it provide an overall framework for managing OH&S, and remain relevant with or without the pandemic. However, there may be learning from the pandemic that influences future revisions of the documents, for example with respect to emergency planning, or to address changes in ways of working after the pandemic, such as an increase in the numbers of people permanently working from home.

As we discussed, BSI has produced guidance specific to the management of OH&S during the pandemic, and ISO/TC 283 is proposing to develop further guidance for long-term planning. While the focus would initially be on the current pandemic, there is scope to develop this to address such threats more generically, reflecting scientific advice that such events are likely to become more frequent.

As the use of computers and technology has increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, will ISO 45000 focus on illness and injuries due to excessive use of computers?

ISO 45001 requires the organization to identify and assess OH&S risks to its workers so this already includes any potential for harm arising from the use of computers and technology. The standard also requires the organization to identify and address changes that may affect levels of risk, and this could include an increased use of computers and technology due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Did ISO standards really identify any kind of risks before the COVID-19 pandemic? If not, work risk frameworks along with ISO standards are not working efficiently.](#)

ISO standards such as ISO 45001, and the business continuity management standard ISO 22301, require organizations to identify hazards, assess risks and apply appropriate controls to manage those risks. A pandemic is most likely to have been considered by organizations in the context of their business continuity, as one of a range of potential causes of major disruption to their markets, workforce or supply chains. Individual organizations will have made different decisions according to their circumstances, as to how vulnerable they considered themselves to be, and what actions they could take to reduce the risks of such disruption. Importantly, the standards encourage organizations to put in place arrangements for managing such crises, and to test these arrangements through drills and simulations. Many organizations will have benefitted from having these arrangements established and in place to help them address the impact of the pandemic. The experience of this pandemic may cause some organizations to review whether they are making sufficient provision to address low frequency high consequence events of this type.

[Should workers be tested for COVID-19 before they return to work? What will be the recommendation in the implementation guidance document?](#)

The organization should certainly put in place processes to assess worker health before workers return to a workplace or return to work activities. Testing is not always widely available, however, and not all workers will be able to have a professional medical health check. Given the nature of the disease it is also possible for a worker to be infected whilst not showing any symptoms, or to contract the disease shortly after a medical check or test. Consequently, it is important that organizations promote open and supportive conversations with workers, encourage self-assessments and reporting. It is also important that organizations train workers in agreed processes to manage incidences of illness at work, and to address situations where a worker becomes ill at home having had recent contact with fellow workers prior to showing symptoms.

[During risk assessment, how can an organization assess the effects of COVID-19 on their employees' families?](#)

The family situation of individual workers can influence what working arrangements are appropriate for the employee. For example, if family members are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19, it will be safer for the worker to work from home, if this is practicable, rather than to travel to work at the organization's premises. This reduces the infection risk for the worker, and benefits the employer, the worker and the worker's family.

From a risk assessment perspective, it is not possible for organizations to assess the likelihood of a worker becoming infected with the virus outside of work, so the risk assessment needs to acknowledge the possibility that infection will occur and provide appropriate controls to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus to other workers. It is also important that the risk assessment takes into account psychosocial risks related to COVID-19: if a family situation means that a worker has particular concerns or challenges due to caring responsibilities or bereavement, for example, this can affect psychological health and how the worker is able to perform

work activities. The organization should therefore take actions to support the worker, adapting work, working hours, or where the work takes place, if necessary.

WORKING FROM HOME / REMOTE WORKING

Now that a lot of workers are working from home, does the workplace include home as well? Should the scope and coverage of occupational hazard risk identification include home as well?

Yes, the scope and coverage of occupational hazard risk identification should include any location in which workers need to be for work or activities related to work. For many people this includes the home, but for mobile workers it can also include other people's homes, or other organizations' premises. For other workers it will include outdoor locations and public spaces, or locations associated with business travel (hotels, airports, etc). The level of consideration given to these various workplaces should be proportionate to the associated risks to the worker.

If accident cases occur at home while working at home, should these be included in an organization's accident statistic data?

Yes, for the organization to effectively manage the OH&S of its workers, it needs a complete picture of its OH&S performance, and any work-related health and/or safety incidents form a part of this picture. Being aware of accidents or health incidents that occur in home workers can help the organization to learn, and enable it to act to prevent re-occurrence. (Requirements about official reporting of incidents like this to external authorities will depend on national or local laws or regulations.)

As home is now part of the workplace, should this new workplace be monitored as part of OHSM?

For some organizations and some workers working from home is a new development, but there are also organizations and workers for whom it is long-established practice, and some for whom working from home has become continuous rather than occasional. Certainly organizations and their workers need to be aware of the OH&S risks associated with home working, and to monitor whether these risks are adequately addressed. This implies that some degree of monitoring is required, though is not to say that physical inspection is necessary, as in many instances workers' feedback on their work-from-home arrangements will provide the necessary information to allow the organization to satisfy itself regarding these arrangements and/or to identify any necessary adjustments.

Sitting for long meetings will have L4-L5 spinal segment/C4-C5 nerve impact for already affected employees

Yes, the pandemic has required larger number of workers to work from home, where the facilities may be less suitable than at their normal work location. The workspace at home may be more limited, seating may not be as adjustable, light levels may be less suitable. There can also be a tendency to sit longer without breaks in the home environment, or to move around less than the typically larger spaces of the normal work environment. Workers therefore need to be encouraged to be alert to these risks, and to make what practical adjustments they can, including the taking of regular breaks and exercise and talking to their organization about provision of equipment (such as suitable chairs or headsets) which can be used at home.

A concern I hear often about remote meetings (Zoom) is that "the boss wants me to turn on my camera, when I am uncomfortable doing

so". [Is this something worker participation can help?](#)

Worker participation, and the encouraging of an open dialogue between workers and managers, can help address such concerns, by allowing people's different perspectives on such issues to be explored, better understood, and potentially addressed. For example: what are the advantages the manager sees in using the camera, and what are the concerns of the worker? Will the opportunity to read body language and facial expression improve the quality of discussions? Would blurring the background of the image help preserve the privacy of the worker's home? Is there a balance to be struck leading to occasional rather than routine use of the camera?

Having a wider team discussion on the topic could also help share experience and encourage the recognition that individual workers' views and preferences vary, and that different approaches may work better for different people and be equally effective.

[When home becomes a workplace, what kind of health and safety measures do we have to take in our social structures?](#)

For some organizations and some workers working from home is a new development, but there are also organizations and workers for whom it is long-established practice, and some for whom working from home has become continuous rather than occasional. Organizations and their workers need to be aware of and address the OH&S risks associated with working from home, but there are also opportunities to learn from those for whom it is long-established practice. Broadly there are two categories of risk to be considered, namely the physical work environment and the psychological effects of remote working. Ensuring regular communication with remote workers is very important so that issues can be identified early and actions taken to address anything that arises, by discussing with the affected worker what solutions can work.

Equally it is important that remote workers don't feel isolated from other colleagues and it can be helpful to establish informal remote drop-in sessions so that colleagues can socialise with each other without having to focus on delivery or usual operational activities.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISO 45001 AND OTHER STANDARDS

[In the current scenario is it compulsory for all organizations certified to ISO 45001 also to be certified to ISO 9001?](#)

External, independent third-party, certification of a management system is voluntary. In some instances, a client organization will require its suppliers to have certification to certain specified standards as part of their contracted terms—this is currently more common with ISO 9001 than with ISO 45001—however this is still a decision for the organization.

[What are the linkages between environment \(E\) and OH&S as most companies in their management are calling for environmental health and safety \(EHS\)?](#)

There are parallels and potential synergies in the environmental management and the management of OH&S in many organizations. Some of these parallels and potential synergies also extend to quality management, and some organizations include this as a combined QHSE function. For example, some incidents that have the potential for harm to workers, such as those involving hazardous chemicals, may also have the potential to cause environmental damage, and the same controls can be used to reduce both the OH&S risk and the environmental risk. However, environmental management and OH&S management each require their own specialist knowledge, and there can be instances in which trade-offs are required because what is most beneficial from

an OH&S perspective is less desirable from an environmental perspective, or vice versa.

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

How can I join you to help with TC283?

The first step is to contact your national standards body (NSB). If it is a participating member of ISO/TC 283 your NSB is likely to have a national mirror that feeds into ISO/TC 283 and sends delegates to ISO meetings. Mirror committees are the focal point for national input to the ISO work, so, regardless of whether you become a delegate, as a mirror committee member you contribute significantly. We are also keen to encourage NSBs that do not currently participate in ISO/TC 283 to do so; if you could help encourage your NSB to become actively involved in our work, we would welcome their participation and will offer as much support as we can to enable this.

How many people from a country can serve on TC 283?

There is no specific limit on how many representatives a country may have on ISO/TC 283. The number will often fluctuate as the committee's work programme evolves, and new working groups are formed or are disbanded upon completion of their work. It is for the national standards body itself, or its "mirror committee", to determine how many representatives it wishes to have involved in each TC 283 activity, or in attendance at each TC meeting.

Does it take 4 years for a standard and general guidelines to be completed, and can this timeframe be reduced in the future?

There are a number of reasons why it can take several years to develop an international

standard. These can include the number of countries participating; variance of legislation, understanding and regional practices; and the time it takes to effectively consult with stakeholders, consider the comments that are submitted, and to reach agreement on how to adjust the text. A three-month commenting period can yield several thousand comments from national standards bodies, the general public and international organizations. The ISO committee needs to discuss and address all of these comments at each stage of the process. ISO recognizes the need to balance agility with rigorous consensus-building, however, so development options with different timeframes are available and committees select the most appropriate for the project. The usual timeframe is 36 months but it can be shorter than this, and in exceptional circumstances, longer.

For example, whilst ISO 45001 took almost 5 years, because it was the first global standard of its kind and a lot of initial issues needed to be resolved, the supporting standard ISO 45003 is expected to publish in 3 years. As there was a good understanding of the subject, and a high level of existing agreement in the committee, the Handbook was able to be developed in less than 18 months. Similarly, the committee is currently considering a guidance document to support organizations during pandemics, and proposing that this is developed very quickly given the urgent market need. It is anticipated revisions of ISO 45001 and other standards will be able to be completed in a reduced timeframe as there is an existing level of understanding and agreement to begin with.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

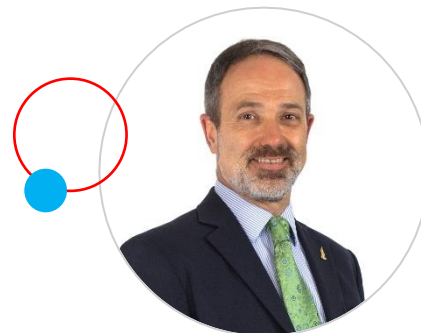


Sally Swingewood

Sally is BSI's Lead Standards Development Manager for business improvement and occupational health and safety management. She is responsible for working with both national and international experts to develop documents that help organizations of all types to improve the way they operate and to better protect the people who work for them.

Sally engages with a broad range of stakeholders to ensure the widest possible views are taken into account when the UK inputs to international standards and frequently holds public meetings to encourage users of the standards to raise issues and propose improvements.

Sally is the manager of the ISO technical committee responsible for the world's first international standard on occupational health and safety management, ISO 45001, and is actively involved in the development of ISO 45003 (guidance on psychological health and safety at work) which will also be the first globally agreed standard of its type.



Martin Cottam

Martin is Group Technical Assurance and Quality Director, with overall responsibility for quality management and technical governance across Lloyd's Register, one of the world's leading providers of professional services for engineering and technology – improving safety and increasing the performance of critical infrastructures world-wide.

Martin is an engineering risk management specialist. He began his career in the nuclear industry, undertaking risk assessment and safety case preparation before joining Lloyd's Register in 1990, to undertake both nuclear and non-nuclear risk management studies. He has risk assessment and safety management experience across many major hazard industries.

Martin has contributed to the development of several OH&S management system standards including OHSAS 18001 and ISO 45001, and the ISO 55000 series on Asset Management.

Martin is a member of BSI's Management Systems Expert Group. He chaired the BSI mirror committee throughout the development of ISO 45001, leading the UK delegation on the ISO 45001 project committee. He now chairs the ISO technical committee for occupational health and safety management (ISO/TC 283), which owns ISO 45001 and is developing additional standards and guidance on OH&S management.

MORE INFORMATION

Watch the recorded webinar [here](#)

Watch other webinars here: HUB.UNIDO.ORG

Information about ISO Standards: ISO.ORG

