

4.4.1 STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITY

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Organizational structure outlines the hierarchy and reporting relationships between various functions and levels in an organization. Duties at each level of responsibility and functional area may be summarized in a more detailed organization chart.

Definitions

Function, Functional Area – Department or area of responsibility. Example: Finance, Environment, Marketing, Maintenance.

Role – Position (job title) held by a person and its relationship to other positions in the organization. Example: President, Department Head, Environmental Management Representative, Purchasing Manager, Maintenance Foreman.

Responsibilities – Assigned duties and obligations of a person in a role. Example: Schedule and lead environmental audits; report compliance monitoring results to government; supervise emergency response team; ensure regular preventive maintenance is done on equipment.

Authority – The power and influence a person has as a result of his or her particular role. Authority also arises from a person's character and personality traits. Example: Authority to request a report on environmental performance; authority to direct a person to take a sample or conduct an analysis; authority to discipline an employee for inappropriate behavior.

ISO 14001 ELEMENT 4.4.1 EXPLAINED

ISO 14001 element 4.4.1 specifies that an organization must “define, document, and communicate” roles, responsibilities, and authorities in the EMS. What is meant by these terms?:

Defined – The organization has identified the positions and described the responsibilities necessary to effectively plan, implement, and maintain all parts of the EMS.

Documented – Details of roles, responsibilities, and authorities have been put in writing, e.g., in job descriptions, organization chart, operating procedures, memoranda, notices.

Communicated – Roles, responsibilities, and authorities have been made known and are understood by everyone – those directly involved, and others who need to know how the EMS functions, i.e., everybody in the organization.

Why is this important? An EMS is all about PEOPLE, and their roles and responsibilities. It is individuals, working as part of a team, who make an EMS come alive and operational. People work best when they have:

- Clearly defined goals and responsibilities;
- Clear reporting relationships and communications upwards, downwards, and sideways in the organization chart; and
- The right kind of resources and support in terms of time, equipment, budget, and colleagues.

Management's Responsibilities

Top management has the responsibility to:

- Define the environmental policy for the organization
- Lead by example in their commitments to continual improvement, prevention of pollution, and compliance with relevant environmental legislation and regulations
- Authorize adequate resources to implement and maintain the EMS
- Reward good performance in the EMS
- Conduct regular management reviews of the EMS
- Integrate environmental management principles and practices into the organizational culture.

RESOURCES

Fine words and good intentions are not sufficient to achieve the potential of an EMS. Management must authorize and ensure the availability of adequate resources to enable operational personnel to put in place and maintain the necessary procedures.

Resources consist of:

- People with the right training, experience, skills, and competence to carry out their responsibilities and tasks efficiently and effectively
- Time to plan, implement, and operate the EMS, in addition to regular duties and responsibilities, if necessary
- Adequate financial support – budget allocations – to enable projects,

improvements in procedures, training, etc. to go ahead as planned

- Tools – equipment and facilities to achieve the objectives and targets, and to maintain the EMS.

ISO 14001 4.4.1 STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITY says:

Roles, responsibilities, and authorities shall be defined, documented, and communicated to facilitate effective management.

Management shall provide resources essential to the implementation and control of the environmental management system. Resources include human resources, and specialized skills, technology, and financial resources.

The organization shall appoint specific management representatives who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have defined roles, responsibilities, and authority for:

- (a) ensuring the EMS requirements are established, implemented, and maintained in accordance with this International Standard
- (b) reporting on the performance of the EMS to top management for review, and as a basis for improvement of the EMS.

Environmental Management System Representative Responsibilities

Each organization implementing an EMS to ISO 14001 specifications must appoint one or more environmental management system representatives (EMR), whose job, with input and assistance from others in the organization, is to:

- Offer guidance and direction to facility management on planning, implementing, maintaining, and improving the EMS
- Monitor the performance of, and progress in, the EMS
- Identify problems in the EMS and initiate corrective and preventive actions if necessary
- Regularly report on progress and problems in the EMS to top management
- Recommend changes in the EMS to top management.

Ingredients of an Effective EMS

Clear vision and plan clearly communicated

People, responsibilities, resources, leadership, and structure aligned properly

Strong leadership from top management and the environmental management representative

Distributed leadership and responsibilities throughout the organizational structure, i.e., each person in the organization fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in the EMS

Abilities, Skills, and Characteristics of an EMR

It takes a special combination of aptitude, know-how, and personality to be an effective EMR. The person selected must:

- Be knowledgeable about environmental issues in general and in the organization in particular

- Be committed to environmental improvement
- Be respected and trusted inside and outside the organization
- Have vision, diplomacy, tenacity, stamina, authority, organizational abilities, and motivation (i.e., both of self and for others).

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Everyone in an organization has an important role to play and responsibilities to fulfil in planning, implementing, maintaining, and improving an EMS.
- Roles, responsibilities, authorities, and reporting structures must be clearly defined, communicated, and understood.
- Management must lead by example, and make available adequate resources in terms of qualified people, time, money, and equipment.
- An EMR is the hub of an EMS, and must have suitable authority, experience, knowledge, respect, personal time and management skills, communication abilities, and character to lead, guide, and encourage others in the organization.
- The EMR is top management's representative in the day-to-day operation of the EMS, and the representative of all operational managers, supervisors, and employees to top management.