

# ISO 14001 4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY



# Lesson Learning Goals

At the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Define 'Environmental Policy'
- Name the ISO 14001 core requirements for an environmental policy
- State at least three characteristics of a good environmental policy
- Evaluate sample environmental policies for acceptability under ISO 14001

# What is an Environmental Policy?

- A statement of intentions and principles to guide environmental performance
- A framework for action; gives the overall direction for activities in the organization
- Motivator for implementing and maintaining the environmental management system
- All subsequent actions are judged against intentions stated in the policy

# ISO 14001 Requirements for Environmental Policy

The environmental policy must be:

- Defined by top management
- Appropriate to the nature, scale, and environmental impacts of the activities, products, or services of the organization
- Documented, implemented, maintained
- Communicated to employees
- Available to the public

# Requirements for Environmental Policy (Cont'd)

- ➔ The environmental policy must include commitments to:
  - » Continual improvement
  - » Prevention of pollution
  - » Comply with relevant environmental legislation and regulations and other requirements to which the organization subscribes

# Requirements for Environmental Policy (Cont'd)

The environmental policy must:

- provide the framework for setting and reviewing environmental objectives and targets
- be communicated, familiarised, and socialised throughout the organization

# ISO 14001 Environmental Policy

## Other Possible Considerations:

- Sustainable development principles
- Use of Best Economically Achievable Technology to reduce pollution
- Use of environmental performance evaluation
- Life cycle thinking
- Product and process design to minimize environmental impacts



# Translations of ISO Speak

- Continual improvement does not mean continuous improvement
- “Other requirements to which the organization subscribes” include industry codes of practice, industry association policies and mission statements, company policies, agreements
- Maintain means keep up-to-date and relevant
- Documented means in writing
- Communicated implies awareness and understanding



# Continual versus Continuous

- ISO 14001 is based on the principle of 'continual' improvement achieved through an ongoing process of implementation, operation, checking effectiveness and correcting deficiencies
- The intent is not to try to achieve 'continuous' improvement as there is a need to pause and review the effectiveness of steps taken to date before determining how best to proceed in correcting identified deficiencies

# Concluding Thoughts

Important points to remember are:

- Much thought and vision must go into the development of an environmental policy
- Top (i.e., senior, executive) management needs to firmly endorse the policy, and preferably be fully involved in its development
- Everyone in the organization must be familiar with the core statements in the policy, and the whole of its intent

# Concluding Thoughts (Cont'd)

The policy should be:

- Clear, concise, motivating, authentic, reflecting the organization's guiding principles, beliefs, ethics and values
- Consistent with other organizational policies, mission or vision statements
- Relevant to all areas of the operation, from raw material supplies to finished product or service

# Concluding Thoughts (Cont'd)

The policy should be:

- Kept up-to-date (though not changed too often!)
- Widely distributed within the organization (e.g., notice boards, offices, reception areas, personal pocket cards, manufacturing areas, training programs)

# Concluding Thoughts (Cont'd)

The policy should be:

- Made available to the public (e.g., newsletter, website, advertisements, announcements)
- Ensure responsibility, authority, and accountability have been assigned for implementing, maintaining, and communicating the environmental policy