

A photograph of a traditional wooden raft carrying a large load of logs down a river. Two people are on the raft: one at the front wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a striped shirt, and another at the back wearing a patterned shirt and dark pants. The background shows a lush green forest on the riverbank.

ISO 14001 4.4.5 DOCUMENT CONTROL



Lesson Learning Goals

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

- State the principal criteria for controlling documents under ISO 14001
- Identify the elements of the Standard for which documentation is required
- Name at least three elements for which documentation is desirable
- Outline a format for a document
- Discuss, with examples, practical methods for document control

Definitions

- Under ISO 14001, documentation refers to all written material concerning the EMS
- Documents include policies, procedures, manuals, plans, diagrams, flowcharts, correspondence, memoranda related to the EMS
- Records are documents, but under ISO 14001 are distinguished from documentation:
 - » Documentation concerns what should happen
 - » Records contain information on what **has** happened

Documents

- ISO 14001 Standard specifications do not require extensive documentation
- A management system needs consistent procedures
- Documentation (i.e., written information) aids consistent application of procedures
- To ensure systematic use of documented procedures, they must be controlled

Here is how ISO 14001 deals with the issue

ISO 14001 Document Control says:

The organization shall establish and maintain procedures for controlling all documents required by this International Standard to ensure that:

- (a) they can be located
- (b) they are periodically reviewed, revised as necessary, and approved for adequacy by authorized personnel

ISO 14001 Document Control (Cont'd)

- (c) the current versions of relevant documents are available at all locations where operations essential to the effective functioning of the EMS are performed
- (d) obsolete documents are promptly removed from all points of issue and points of use, or otherwise assured against unintended use
- (e) any obsolete documents retained for legal and/or knowledge preservation purposes are suitably identified

ISO 14001 Document Control (Cont'd)

Documentation shall be legible, dated (i.e., with dates of revision), and readily identifiable, maintained in an orderly manner and retained for a specified period. Procedures and responsibilities shall be established and maintained concerning the creation and modification of the various types of document.

In Other Words

Documents must be:

- Available where and when needed
- Clear, up to date, identifiable, dated (including revisions), stored neatly and logically, kept for a specified period of time
- Developed, reviewed, revised, approved, and modified only by authorized persons
- Removed from use when out of date
- Identified as obsolete if archived

Must Document

- 4.2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
- 4.3.3 Environmental objectives and targets
- 4.4.1 Roles, responsibilities, and authority for EMS
- 4.4.3 Communications from external interested parties
- 4.4.4 EMS core elements

Must Document (Cont'd)

- 4.4.6 Procedures essential for operational control
- 4.5.1 Monitoring and measurement of key operations that have potential significant impacts
- 4.5.1 Compliance with laws and regulations
- 4.5.3 Records
- 4.6 MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Good Idea to Document

- 4.3.1 Environmental aspects and impacts inventory
- 4.3.2 Significant environmental aspects
- 4.3.3 Registry of legislation and regulations
- 4.3.4 Environmental management programs - action plans to achieve objectives and targets
- 4.4.2 Training needs results, and training plans
- 4.4.7 Emergency response plan
- 4.5.2 Corrective and preventive actions
- 4.5.5 EMS audit results

How to Control Documents

- ➔ Use a standard format for procedures
- ➔ Include:
 - » title, author/originator
 - » organization, department, function
 - » purpose, scope, definitions
 - » procedure, persons responsible
 - » records, forms, related documents, references
 - » authorized approval signature
 - » initial date, and dates of revisions

How to Control Documents (Cont'd)

- Identify all printed copies as 'uncontrolled'
- Store controlled versions of documents electronically (e.g., networked computer files)
- On-line 'read only' access by employees
- Changes to documents made only by authorized personnel - restricted access

How to Control Documents (Cont'd)

- Schedule regular review and revision of procedures
- Notify all relevant personnel when a procedure is changed
- Keep a register of paper copies of key documents held by individuals
- Educate personnel about document controls

Concluding Thoughts

Important points to remember are:

- Environmental management documentation is information that must be controlled to maintain an orderly EMS
- Only specific authorized persons are permitted to develop or change EMS documents
- Employees need easy access to EMS documentation
- Computer-based storage of documents is an effective means of control and accessibility

Concluding Thoughts (Cont'd)

Additional points to remember are:

- Strive for a consistent format for documented procedures
- Ensure only the latest version of each document is available wherever it is needed
- Mark paper copies 'uncontrolled' to alert reader that a more recent version may be available on-line