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WHS is everyone's responsibility. So, how do we comply?

It's an interesting topic that needs discussion and understanding. Compliance is obligatory, and the applicable legal requirements should be part of every organisation. However, it is unclear how effectively an organisation complies and respect WHS.

October being the [National Safe Work Month](#) in Australia, [QPro Australia](#) have taken this opportunity to help organisation to understand the application of WHS. Organisation have the responsibility and accountability of WHS. It's quite challenging to balance the routine business and to maintain WHS compliance. Many organisation successfully achieve their compliance by maintaining a WHS management system (WHSMS). Even, if an organisation has no formal management systems, they still require meeting the legal requirements applicable to their processes, products, services, safety (personnel, infrastructure and environment), supplier chain, procurements, environmental impacts etc. So, how do they do it?

To get a clear understanding, QPro Australia have reviewed the safety facts from Australia and based on the study and reality, a recommendation is given in this article. So, take advantage of this opportunity and wear the WHS hat to get your organisation going.

Safety facts from Australia

The safety statistics and research figures published by the [Safe Work Australia \(2018\)](#) clearly indicates that work-related injuries, illnesses and deaths impose costs on employers, workers and the community. These include both direct costs and indirect costs.

In Australia, 190 workers were fatally injured at work in 2017 with 93% of those workers were male. The state-wide distribution of these fatalities was – 20 in WA, 7 in NT, 14 in SA, 45 in QLD, 62 in NSW, 36 in VIC, 1 in ACT and 5 in TAS. However, the fatality rate has decreased by 48% from the peak in 2007.

The total serious workers' compensation claims were 106,260 during the same period, of which 64% claims were made by male. 38% related to body stressing and 24% to falls, trips and slips of a person. However, the overall serious claim frequency rate has dropped by 28% in comparison from 2006-07 to 2015-2016.

These details are statistically described in the [Safe Work Australia \(2018\)](#). Similar statistics of Work-related Injuries in Australia (Jul 2017 to Jun 2018) are also published by the [Australian Bureau of Statistics \(ABS\)](#). The ABS statistics summarise the findings by age groups, occupation, type of industry, financial assistance, absences.

In summary, there has been a significant improvement in the statistics in comparison to 2006-07. That evidence proves that organisation have seriously committed themselves to workplace health and safety. It has been possible due to various reasons. QPro Australia believes that, WHS management system has potentially influenced organisation in better management of workplace safety. WHSMS brings awareness, understanding and improvements in safety processes of any organisation.

So, a right way to understand WHS and to take on the leadership to lead safety is the best solution for now and the future.

Improve WHS processes and ensure compliance to legal requirements

Every individuals and organisation in all form of industries must seriously think and proactively support the importance of WHS. All industries have an obligations to comply to the local, state, national and international legal requirements. So, organisation must develop WHS process that assures compliance. There is no shortcuts or escape routes to avoid compliance to these legal requirements.

Failing to meet the legal requirements have a serious consequences including costly fines and even imprisonment.

For an organisation, compliance to applicable legal requirements depends on its location, size, type of business, products and services and other relevant factors. Choosing to implement a formalised occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system is voluntary but there are several benefits and the OHSMS allows organisation to;

- Improve workplace health and safety performance
- Eliminate, avoid or reduce work-related injuries and illnesses
- Contributes safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders
- Helps to identify and ensure compliance to legal requirements
- Prevents incidents and protects everyone's safety
- [Other benefits](#)

A step towards WHS

Most organisation have WHS practices as part of their daily routine and are likely to have an informal or semi-formal WHS processes. In such environments, these activities may work but how effective are the WHS process? It depends on company culture and some of these activities may include e.g.

- 1 Involvement of employees in WHS activities
- 2 Organise ad hoc WHS training on a need basis
- 3 Limited information or informal WHS process available
- 4 Ineffective communication (posters, notices, information may be displayed or occasional briefings)
- 5 Rewarding and/or incentives to individuals as a motivational tool
- 6 Safety is seen as an additional task/activity by organisation
- 7 Safety is evident but may not be a priority
- 8 WHS documents are informal

The above informal or semi-formal safety process, culture and sustenance of safety involves high risks. These practices need change and organisation have to implement a formalised WHS framework that becomes safety part of organisation culture/DNA. This can be demonstrated by introducing and driving safety by

- 1 Being proactive (top-down)
- 2 Own leadership
- 3 Be committed and supportive
- 4 Have a safety champion
- 5 Formalise a safety (WHS) framework
- 6 Identify risks and opportunities
- 7 Develop and implement WHSMS
- 8 Train personnel at all levels and have ongoing safety training
- 9 Develop and communicate WHS topics
- 10 Recognise individual's contribution
- 11 Make safety enjoyable and DNA of your organisation
- 12 And more

In a formalised organisation, there are evidence of different types of management systems like the ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015, ISO 27001:2013... These management system processes require the organisation to consider all applicable legal and other requirements that ensures legal compliance, and conformity of their products and services. However, the ISO 45001:2018 requirements gets organisation to protect workers safety, minimise the risk of injury or illness, identify risks and opportunities, comply to legal requirements and creates a positive safety culture.

QPro Australia gives an overview, introduction, an insight to the WHS requirements and a guidance to implement a WHSMS using the ISO 45000:2018 standard (OH&S).

Note: In this article, the workplace health and safety (WHS) represents the term OHS/OH&S. MS means Management System.

International OH&S standard

'ISO 45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems - Requirements with guidance for use'

The purpose of this section is to give a brief tour of the ISO 45001:2018 standard and guidance to WHSMS development and implementation framework. QPro Australia recommends a simple solutions in the development, implementation and maintenance of the ISO 45001:2018 in your organisation. The WHSMS framework would enable organisation to identify OH&S hazards, risks and opportunities to proactively manage to support worker wellness/well-being, identify legal requirements and more.

1. INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW & UNDERSTANDING OF ISO 45001:2018

ISO 45001:2018 is an occupational health and safety standard that helps organisation to manage risks and opportunities to prevent work-related injury and ill health to workers. The effective rollout of the WHS framework

intends to improve and provide a safe and healthy workplace. It also ensures that organisation meet the needs of their customers and stakeholders while fulfilling legal requirements.

a. ISO 45001:2018 Overview

ISO 45001 is intended to help organisations, regardless of size or industry, in designing systems to proactively prevent injury and ill health. All its requirements are designed to be integrated into an organisation's management and business processes.

b. Structure of International Standard application to ISO 45001:2018 - New Annex SL Structure

Foreword	4. Context of the Organization
Introduction	5. Leadership and Worker Participation
0.1 Background	6. Planning
0.2 Aim of OH&S Management System	7. Support
0.3 Success Factors	8. Operation
0.4 Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle	9. Performance Evaluation
1. Scope	10. Improvement
2. Normative References	Annex A: Guidance on the use of this International Standard
3. Terms and Definitions	Bibliography
	Alphabetical Index of Terms

c. Facts to be known about ISO 45001:2018

Some of the key information and requirements that an organisation need to know about the WHSMS per ISO 45001:2018 are.

- There are 90 SHALL's in the ISO 45001:2018 standard. The verbal forms 'SHALL' indicates a REQUIREMENT; and they are a MUST requirement to be met and demonstrated. NOTE: In the standard, any requirements normally begin with "The organization shall...".
- The word 'worker' appears 72 times with in the 10 clauses of the standard (134 times throughout the standard).
- Internal and external issues:** External issues may be such as socio-economic and political instability; whilst internal issues may be restructuring, acquisitions, plants and machineries, environment, new products, technology etc.
- Interested parties:** The organisation is required to determine the needs and expectations of 'interested parties' in the WHSMS standard. It means that understanding everything that can influence the purpose and strategic direction of the company e.g. organisation culture, innovation, strategic direction, competition, market, compliance obligation, work time, work conditions, the workers, workers union, organisation's parent company, shareholders, legal authorities, government agencies, regulatory bodies, suppliers and contractors, customers, other stakeholders etc.
- The standard uses 'external providers' instead of contractors, subcontractors or suppliers (*to be compliant with ISO 9001:2015*)
- 'Documented information' referred in the standard means to include both documents and records. The phrase "retain documented information as evidence of ..." to mean **RECORDS**, and "shall be maintained as documented information" to mean **DOCUMENTS**, including procedures (*to be compliant with ISO 9001 version 2015*)
- WHS Manual is optional

2. INTEGRATION OF LEGAL REQUIREMENTS IN WHSMS

When an organisation opts to have a formalised WHSMS implemented, it has a choice to select any of the options listed below. The WHSMS framework ensures compliance to the legal requirements, gives transparency of the systems and processes, helps to better manage the overall workplace safety.

- 01. Get ISO 45001:2018 certified by a third-party auditing body – VOLUNTARY + COMPLIANCE + EFFECTIVE
- 02. Develop, implement and maintain a compliance framework using ISO 45001:2018 standard - COMPLIANCE
- 03. Intermittent and inconsistent application of legal requirements (too risky and inconsistent process that could jeopardise business, wellbeing of stakeholders, safety and more – DO NOT RECOMMEND

The most effective option to formalise and mandate is the **01**.

a. Why option 01?

Organisation with option 1 can be consistently competitive in the marketplace and it assures many benefits to their local and global customers. More importantly, the safety to their immediate customer 'THE EMPLOYEES'. An effective and certified organisation can demonstrate e.g.;

- 🍌 Reliable and safe services
- 🍌 Safe environment
- 🍌 Protect stakeholder's safety and wellbeing
- 🍌 Can deliver sustainable products and services
- 🍌 Practices would warrant a high-quality performances
- 🍌 Eliminates and/or minimises accidents and incidents
- 🍌 Happy and satisfied customers (internal and external) and more.

b. What are the other potential benefits?

Certifying an organisation to ISO 45001:2018 occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system enables to prove that it conforms to the specification and provides the following benefits e.g.;

- 🍌 High degree of compliance to legal and other requirements
- 🍌 Customer satisfaction (consistently delivers sustained quality products and services)
- 🍌 Reduced operating costs (no or reduced downtimes, employee and product safety is protected, less or no incidents, reduced insurance, legal fees and compensation costs etc.)
- 🍌 Transparent and safe working environment. Happy stakeholders (internal and external)
- 🍌 Compliance to legal requirements (process, products, services, environment and other)
- 🍌 Effective risk management process (products, services, environment, process and other)
- 🍌 Proves business credentials (independent third-party verification against ISO 45001:2018 standard)
- 🍌 Ability to win new business deals, particularly where procurement specification requires certification as a condition to supply. To market organisation products and services etc.

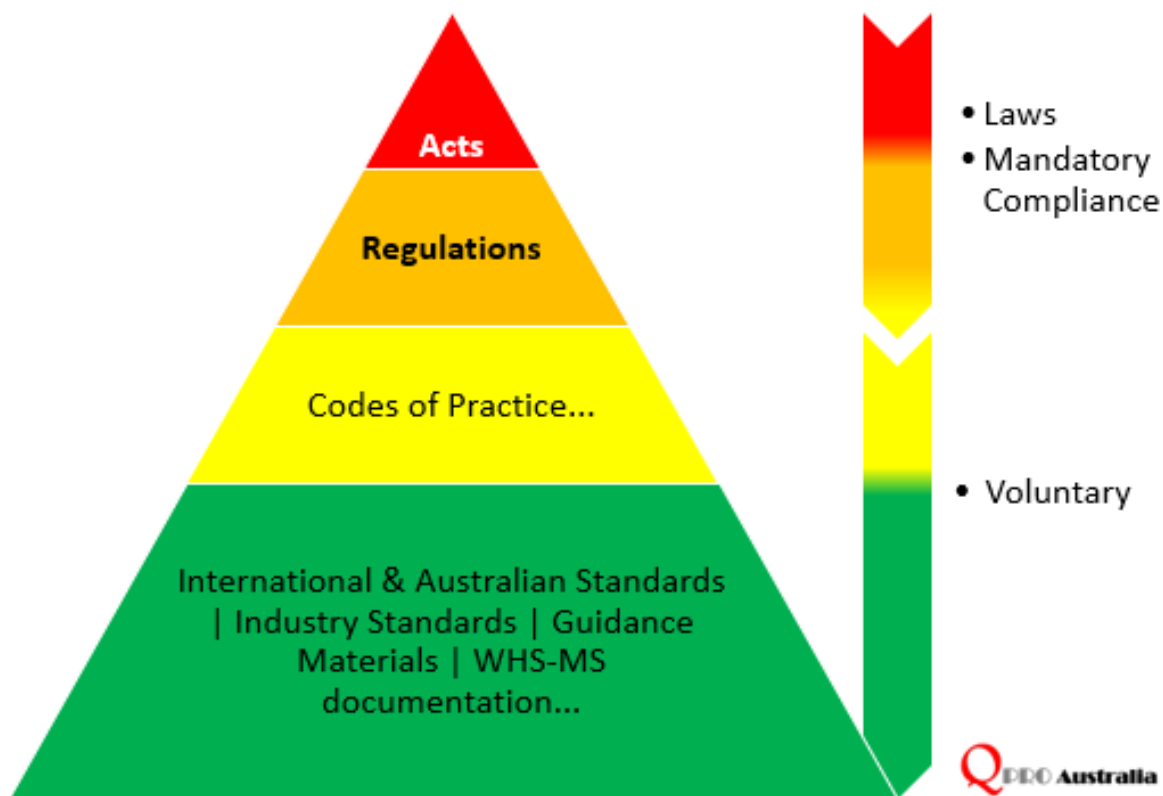
3. COMPLIANCE PYRAMID

Acts and Regulations (Legal requirements) are OBLIGATORY AND MANDATORY requirements. The legal requirements can be related to processes, products and services, environmental, type of business, safety and more. Organisation need to use this model to understand the applicable laws before developing and applying to their systems and processes operatable in an ISO 45001:2018 framework.

The legal requirements always take precedence over the requirements of an organisation.

For additional information, browse through some of these recently published article

- 📌 [Statutory and Regulatory Requirements](#)
- 📌 [Health & Safety MS – A Comparison Matrix Guide](#)
- 📌 [Starting the Transition to AS/NZS ISO 45001](#)



4. WHAT NEXT?

4.1 Business Commitment:

Should the organisation choose to implement ISO 45001:2018, then these are the musts at minimum i.e.;

- 📌 Understand and know the requirements of the standard
- 📌 Commit and support
- 📌 Appoint an WHSMS leader
- 📌 Develop WHSMS project plan
- 📌 Identify risks and opportunities
- 📌 Develop, implementation and certify to ISO 45001:2018
- 📌 Continuous improvement

4.2 Understand the key requirements of the ISO 45001:2018 standard

The ISO 45001:2018 has references to the Legal Requirements in the standard whose section/clauses are listed below.

- 📌 Clause 4.2 | 5.2c | 5.4d-4 | 6.1.1c | 6.1.5a-2 | 7.4.1d | 7.4.3 | 7.5.1b | 8.1.2 | 8.1.3b | 8.1.4.3 | 9.1.1a-1 | 9.1.2 | 9.3b-2 & 9.3d-3

4.3 Terms and Definitions from ISO 45001:2018

There are definitions of certain terms that are new or modified (see clause 3 of ISO 45001:2018):

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| • effectiveness | • measure |
| • outsource | • participation |
| • documented information | • performance |
| • contractor | • OH&S performance |
| • workplace | • process |

- risk
- monitoring
- worker

Below extracts are examples from the standard that has definitions for common understanding. For additional definitions, view 'Terms and Definitions' at clause 3 in the ISO 45001:2018 standard.

3.1 organization
 person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its *objectives* (3.16)

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

Note 2 to entry: This constitutes one of the common terms and core definitions for ISO management system standards given in Annex SL of the Consolidated ISO Supplement to the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1.

3.3 worker
 person performing work or work-related activities that are under the control of the *organization* (3.1)

Note 1 to entry: Persons perform work or work-related activities under various arrangements, paid or unpaid, such as regularly or temporarily, intermittently or seasonally, casually or on a part-time basis.

Note 2 to entry: **Workers** include *top management* (3.12), managerial and non-managerial persons.

Note 3 to entry: The work or work-related activities performed under the control of the organization may be performed by **workers** employed by the organization, **workers** of external providers, contractors, individuals, agency **workers**, and by other persons to the extent the organization shares control over their work or work-related activities, according to the context of the organization.

3.9 legal requirements and other requirements
 legal requirements that an *organization* (3.1) has to comply with and other *requirements* (3.8) that an organization has to or chooses to comply with

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, **legal** requirements and other requirements are those relevant to the *OH&S management system* (3.11).

Note 2 to entry: "**Legal** requirements and other requirements" include the provisions in collective agreements.

Note 3 to entry: **Legal** requirements and other requirements include those that determine the persons who are *workers*' (3.3) representatives in accordance with laws, regulations, collective agreements and practices.

5. PROCESS STEPS TO ACHIEVE WHSMS CERTIFICATION

Organisation now need to do the following

- 🔴 Learn and understand the requirements of ISO 45001:2018 at all levels
- 🔴 Management to commit and support
- 🔴 Appoint a champion or a leader for WHSMS
- 🔴 Communicate at all levels
- 🔴 Perform a gap analysis
- 🔴 Develop a project plan and seek management team approval
- 🔴 Training and coaching at all levels
- 🔴 Develop and implement WHSMS
- 🔴 Perform internal audit

- Management review
- Continuous improvements
- Certification audit
- Achieve ISO 45001:2018 certification

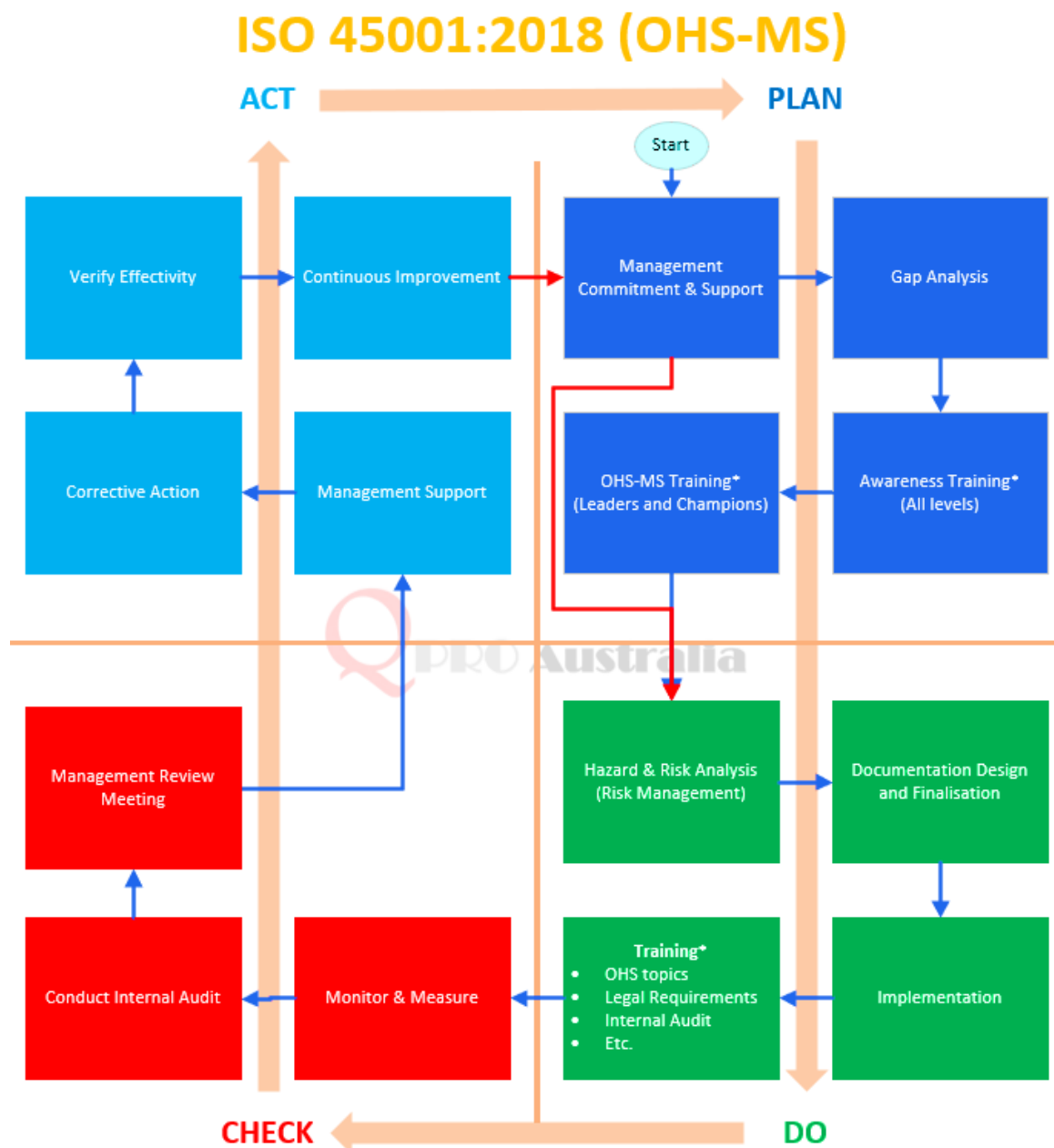
6. WHSMS FRAMEWORK - OVERVIEW

Organisations have the option to (as referenced at section 2 of this article).

- To certify and maintain the WHSMS
- Develop, implement and maintain the WHSMS

So, using the ISO 45001:2018 standard, the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model is applied in the development of the WHSMS framework. If your organisation already has any other management systems, you can have an Integrated Management System (IMS). This has many advantages and is effective to manage.

A generic WHSMS flowchart is a guide that illustrates the WHSMS development, implementation and maintenance process. If an organisation wants the ISO 45001:2018 certification, the process is easy. An organisation can choose to select the third-party Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) of their choice. QPro Australia can assist in the preparation of your management system and support in the third-party CAB selection process.



7. CONCLUSION

Safety is not a onetime process in any organisation. It must be respected, become part of our daily routine and business practices. Organisation requires a thorough understanding, commitment, support, practice and a proactive approach to demonstrate safety at all levels. Safety is related to people, environment, resources, infrastructure and is applicable in all forms of businesses and industries. It is possible to react and maintain safety to fit an organisation culture, but it is equally challenging to assure safety across board. The ISO 45001:2018 is the answer to organisations' growing challenges and their commitment that can make a big difference.

Let our thoughts build towards a sustained SAFETY not just for today but for life.

8. SOURCE REFERENCES

- 📍 ISO 9000:2015 Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary
- 📍 ISO 45001:2018 Occupational health and safety management systems — Requirements with guidance for use
- 📍 [Safe Work Australia](#)
- 📍 [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

