Articles   **June 2015**

Implementing a H&S management system

Publishers: Health and Safety Publications

Author: Dr Dan Gallagher and SHEQ Centre of Excellence colleagues

Pages: 176

Price: €35

Available: email *dgallagher@centre-of-excellence.org*

The purpose of Health & Safety Management System Implementation: a practitioner's guide and approach, is, as the title implies, to guide employers and their safety advisors who have decided to adopt an OSH management system.

The book could be described as a 'walk-through' guide. After an introductory chapter (chapters are called sections), there are 17 chapters, starting with health and safety policy and concluding with continuous improvement.

The chapters are followed by ten very useful appendices. The style is easy to read and, for anyone interested in health and safety management, even if they are not going to adopt a formal safety management system, the book is a useful refresher guide and prompter of ideas.

Take for example the remark: "A regulator will assume if a control is not documented, it does not exist". That is very true, not just in terms of talking to the HSA, but when it comes to defending claims. Take another remark: "risk assessment is the cornerstone". It is not original, but it is a message that should always be in mind.

Those remarks are good advice, as is the injunction to identify the root cause of non-conformances. Identifying that cause may prevent an accident or an incident at a later date. The importance of having a legal register is stressed, as is the need to keep it up-to-date. One very useful suggestion is that the register should include pending changes to legislation by looking ahead to changes due in the next three to five years. Given that EU Directives are well-flagged in advance, this is doable with a little effort.

It is suggested that standards, such as OHSAS 18001, should be included in the register. The reason put forward is convincing: it is seen as a declaration of intention to stay compliant. However, if an organisation felt this was not quite the right section in which to place standards, perhaps they could include a register of standards. Looking ahead, Dr Gallagher writes that OHSAS 18001 is due to be superseded soon by ISO 45000.

Coming back to the chapters, the topics covered include hazard identification, objectives/targets, resources/roles, competence/training, communication/consultation, documentation/document control, legal requirements, operational controls, control of records, emergency preparedness, monitoring/measurement, incident investigation, nonconformity, internal audit and management review.

The ten appendices are a mix of checklists and notes, such as the chapters on good practice and offices. As well as the checklists in the appendices, there are checklists and action points in various chapters.

Gallagher's opening words "Health and safety management is complex" are true. Drawing on years of experience in implementing management systems, Dr Gallagher offers readers an easily assimilated guide through the complexities and, for the future, a useful reference resource. Speaking to HSR, he said the publisher's intention is that purchasers of the book will be able to join a private LinkedIn group, where further resources will be made available.

This book is available to purchase at the following link: http://hspublications.ie/?product=health-safety-management-system-implementation

The Health and Safety Review is a leading, independent publication for health and safety, environmental, legal professionals and business owners. Further information is available at www.hsr.ie. This article was published in the June 2015 issue.