

Environmental Assessments for ISO 14001:2004

Gap Analysis ...

The next step in our ISO 14001:2004 Project is to conduct a "Gap Analysis". This is an evaluation of our current activities to see what we have in place that already meets the requirements of ISO 14001:2004, and what we will need to do to meet the full requirements.

People/auditors/inspectors from our company will be using a detailed checklist and visiting all departments with questions on how you do things. They will want to see procedures and records so they can evaluate the current methods and comparing them with the requirements of the standard. This information will help us plan our ISO 14001:2004 Project.

Environmental Assessments ...

To determine our position with regards to the environment the gap analysis will be supplemented with a 12-point Initial Environmental Review.

With a group of assessment worksheets, we will quickly know where we stand as we get started with the EMS project and will cover:

- The environmental assessment to identify the environmental aspects and their impacts,
- The identification of legal and other requirements,
- The action plan and timing for the development of environmental programs and targets,
- The assignment of improvements and follow up on the actions needed to increase your environmental capabilities.

After the Environmental Assessments ...

When we have completed the gap analysis and the environmental assessments, a plan will be put together to address the requirements of ISO 14001:2004. This plan will include outlining new ways of doing things, and documenting procedures and work instructions.

Many employees will be involved in this initiative. We have appointed an ISO Management Representative to coordinate the EMS implementation and established an Environmental Team to support this effort. This team will be involved in identifying how to meet requirements in different areas, and documenting the new way of doing things in Procedures and Work Instructions.

Highlights: Things that you will be hearing about as we proceed with ISO 14001

Procedures

Procedures will be written to describe how a process is done. For example, a procedure will be written for the handling of environmental programs to describe that process. When required, work instructions will be prepared to provide more details.

Work Instructions

Work Instructions are written to describe how to do a project, a task or a process. In the above example for environmental programs, an action plan is detailed to describe the steps for an environmental project.

Watch for our next newsletter for more introduction to ISO 14001:2004, what it will mean to you and your coworkers.