



EnviroRisk

EMS Implementation Roadmap: Applying a Seven (7) Step Approach to Certification

Experience reveals that there are seven (7) essential steps that should be taken to efficiently devise and implement an Environmental Management System that conforms and may be certified to ISO 14001.

The following Roadmap aims to guide you through the 7-Step implementation process, being:

1. Highly visible top level commitment
2. A comprehensive initial review
3. Site based 'Champions' at functional levels to lead program
4. Detailed compliance and conformance review
5. Integration of systems documentation
6. Education and awareness
7. Final status check

A selection of checklist questions/ specifications is provided to guide you sequentially through the implementation process to maximize the EMS's relevance and uptake within your organisation.

Taking the 7-steps approach may not be the only way of implementing an EMS - but it is a proven method that has achieved considerable success in recent times.

Step 1. Highly Visible Top Level Commitment

Preamble:

The successful implementation of an EMS requires commitment from Management to put into effect a new work culture and allocating capital to upgrade any facilities to meet environmental objectives.

The drive for the environmental system must come from Management level.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Actioned
1. The ISO 14001 standard has been purchased, reviewed by someone in Management level and discussed at Management meetings?	
2. The main reason(s) for implementing an EMS has been identified and communicated?	
3. Senior Management has considered if resources (technical and financial) are available within the company for implementing the EMS?	
4. Management has investigated what external assistance is available and where and when it is likely to be used?	
5. An implementation schedule has been drafted?	
6. Financial allocation has been allocated to meet expenses related with the system. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading activities and practises to ensure there is not impact on the environment (could include improvements to storage of liquid and wastes) • Purchasing spill response equipment and other pollution prevention controls • Paying for recycling bins • Employing the services of external contractors/ specialists (some assistance may be necessary with initial review, environmental legislation, EMP implementation, training, etc.) 	

<p>8. An allocation for internal resources has been made.</p> <p>Considerable time from several employees will be required to get the system up and running.</p>	
<p>9. An Environmental Policy has been written, signed by the CEO and displayed in areas visible to employees and visitors.</p>	
<p>10. The Policy has been distributed to all staff and promoted by Senior Management.</p>	
<p>11. An EMS Coordinator(s) has been nominated to progress the implementation of the EMS?</p>	

Outcome:

At the end of Step 1, Management should have obtained an understanding of the ISO 14001 standard and identified resources (employee, financial and time) to be made available for the implementation of the EMS. An implementation timeframe of 6-12 months is not unreasonable or unusual.

An environmental policy should be displayed in various locations across the site.

Employees should be aware that an EMS is now being implemented and regard it as an essential part of business practice.

TIP: Use promotional items such as coffee mugs, Laminated (pocket sized) Policy, Banners in the workplace to raise awareness, Environmental Posters.

EMS Solutions Tools:

Display Environmental Posters through-out Workplace

Step 2. A Comprehensive Initial Review

Preamble:

Conducting an initial environmental review is critical to identify gaps in a company's current environmental performance.

Even if there is an existing management system in practise at the company, there is still potential for large deficiencies in meeting the ISO 14001 EMS requirements.

It is generally worthwhile to employ a consultant to conduct an initial environmental review. These people are not at the company everyday, will not be familiar with site activities, so will have to look around extensively and ask lots of questions. The consultants should be accompanied by at least one site employee (usually the EMS Coordinator) to ensure that they can learn from the experience.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Actioned
1. To determine what items should be covered in the initial review, obtain a copy of the ISO 14004 standard.	
2. If you are competent in environmental issues, develop an initial review checklist based on the ISO 14004 standard to conduct the review. Otherwise, use a recognized tool such as AuditMASTER™ or contact an external specialist to conduct this review for you.	
3. Ensure the initial review is documented and provides direction as to what is now needed. i.e. recommendations are provided for allocation and action.	
4. Score your performance so as you can track your improvements and demonstrate improvement.	
5. Use the recommendations from the initial review as a guide to progressing your EMS and as the basis for your initial Environmental Management Program.	

Outcome:

At the end of step 2, you should have conducted an initial environmental review of your existing environmental performance and management system to determine how much work is required to achieve ISO 14001 certification.

This will assist with your schedule as to how long the process is likely to take and confirm resources are likely to be required.

TIP:

The initial review can streamline the EMS implementation process. Put in the time to make it comprehensive and generate for you an EMP.

EMS Solutions Tools:

Use AuditMASTER™ to audit your EMS.

Outcomes are stored, recommendations summarized and a report automatically prepared.

Step 3. Site based 'Champions' at functional levels to lead program

Preamble:

A successful EMS relies on site-based personnel to identify potential significant environmental aspects and solve problems. Seek out and identify Sectional Leaders with a 'can do' attitude. These environmental 'Champions' often volunteer to assist the EMS Coordinator with the implementation of the EMS within their functional area.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Yes / No
1. Personnel in key areas that reveal an interested in environment protection have been identified?	
2. A number of 'Champions', ideally at a variety of Leadership levels, have been selected to implement good environmental practice within their areas.	
3. Support is provided to site 'Champions' including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - being part of a team to provide input; - encouraging ideas to resolve issues (and implementing such ideas); - provision of separate budgets to action items; - progressing highly visible solutions as a priority to gather momentum for the implementation process. 	

Outcome:

By the end of step 3, site based 'Champions' who can lead the EMS implementation process should be actively involved with the EMS implementation.

TIP:

Accept all ideas and action simple yet highly visible solutions early in the process i.e. recycling bins, brightly coloured spill response bins, green painted stormwater entry grates (maybe with a fish symbol added), photo's of the environmental co-ordinators on noticeboards, family competitions, etc.

Step 4. Detailed compliance and conformance review

Preamble:

One of the commitments made in the environmental policy is to comply with relevant environmental legislation. With this said, someone on the site needs to understand or have access to someone that understands environmental legislation.

Some sites need environmental licenses, others simply need to operate in accordance to their State or Territory Acts, Regulations, Policies, Codes of Practice, Guidelines, etc.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Yes / No
1. Have the significant environmental impacts been identified and documented?	
2. Does the site require Environment Protection Licensing?	
3. Can you demonstrate compliance with relevant environment protection regulations, policy and guidelines?	
4. Have you identified what other compliance/ conformance requirements are relevant to your operations eg Greenhouse gas reduction, client specifications, Parent company Policy, etc.?	
5. Do you hold copies of relevant environmental legislation at your company or can you readily access such legislation?	
6. Does your current system ensure legal information is relevant and up to date?	

Outcome:

At the end of step 4, the following should have been completed:

1. identification of significant environmental impacts.
2. if site holds an environment protection licence, conditions should have been reviewed.

3. identification of relevant legal and other requirements (internal or external review).
4. obtaining copies of relevant legal and other requirements documentation.
5. developing a process (and procedure) that highlights how access to legal and other requirements will be kept relevant and up to date.

TIP:

Use an environmental practitioner to support the development of your 'legal and other' register as there is a plethora of subsidiary material that can make you EMS cumbersome if not avoided.

The internet is a very useful tool with most legislation and publications available on-line. Have applicable legislation and publications hyperlinked as part of your access requirements.

EMS Solutions Tools:

Use the Enviro Links package to enable ready access to legal requirements.

Step 5. Integration of Systems Documentation

Preamble:

Where existing documentation relevant to the EMS is available, amend existing systems documents rather than creating new ones.

Similarities between quality management systems and environmental management systems include: records, document control, auditing and management review.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Yes / No
<p>1. The following types of procedures and documentation can readily be integrated into Quality Systems eg ISO 9001:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility and Accountabilities • Training • Records • Document control • Auditing • Management review 	
<p>2. If there is no established systems documentation, utilise your environmental 'Champions' and Management to brainstorm how significant Aspects can best be controlled.</p> <p>A simple Matrix is used to determine Aspects significance.</p>	
<p>3. Set a rule that procedures are to be no longer than 3 pages and preferentially less than a page. Use Forms, Tables and Matrices to back up procedures.</p>	
<p>4. Environment related issues are discussed at Management Review meetings and during regular tool box talks or staff meetings?</p>	

Outcomes:

By the end of step 5, areas where ISO 14001 requirements can be integrated into existing systems should have been identified.

Commence (if you have not already done so) discussing the EMS at Management Review meetings, staff meetings or during tool box talks.

TIP:

All significant Aspects should have an associated operational control procedure that controls the activity or process.

EMS Solutions Tools:

Model Procedures, Forms, Matrices and Tables

Step 6. Education and Awareness

Preamble:

Environmental education and awareness is vital for an EMS. Without an understanding of what an environmental impact is, employees cannot be expected to improve their performance.

Our home, recreation and work place environmental are often inseparable.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Yes / No
1. Have all staff been through environmental awareness training? 2.	
3. Have those staff involved in activities related to significant environmental impacts been trained in specific procedures (eg. waste handling)? 4.	
5. Have the people who will be auditing the EMS and sites environmental performance received any auditor training (note: this need only be an update session for those already quality auditor trained)? 6.	
7. Visual aids assist with the learning process. Have any environment related posters or photographs of the sites 'before and after' performance been displayed? 8.	

Outcomes:

At the end of step 6, all staff should have been through some form of environmental awareness training - or if the training has not yet been carried out for all staff, it will be in the near future.

People involved in key areas of the EMS, for example, auditing and working in significant impact areas, should have received appropriate training.

Displaying some pictures or posters that show improved environmental performance.

TIP:

Use the training needs matrix to identify who needs what training.

EMS Solutions Tools:

Environmental Awareness Training Kit (Model Form).

Step 7. Final Status Check Audit

Preamble:

Before the third party certification audit takes place, a trial run should be conducted. The final status or pre-certification audit enables any final issues to be polished up. In addition to having the company fully prepared for the certification audit, the final status check audit report can be compared to the initial review to show evidence of continual improvement in the company's environmental performance.

Checklist:

Question or comment:	Actioned
1. Your EMS has been tested against ISO 14001 specifications. 2.	
3. Have you documented evidence of any audits, records (eg. training) or management review meeting minutes that can be viewed? 4.	
5. You can demonstrate conformance against your Environmental Policy. 6.	

Outcomes:

Finally, at the end of step 7, the EMS should be implemented. The final status check of the system should reveal that there are controls for significant aspects and that requirements in the ISO 14001 standard have been met.

Documents such as Management Review meeting minutes, training records and audit reports are available for the third party certification auditor to review.

There has been an announcement made to staff, or a notice displayed informing them why a third party certification audit is required and what is required during the audit.

The auditors are looking for systems documentation that meets the ISO 14001 standard, coupled with site personnel demonstrating an understanding of their role in ensuring our environment is protected.

TIP:

Undertake your review by taking the role of a certification auditor. Test whether procedures are available and followed. Trace whether documented proof is readily available and located where it should be. Quiz you associates knowledge of the EMS as it affect them.

EMS Solutions Tools:

Update audit using AuditMASTER

Task Tracking Software

CONCLUSION:

Upon completing the checklist, you should now be in a position to achieve Certification should you desire. Certification of your EMS however, is not a destination.

Your journey to responsibly manage environmental conditions on your site has just begun with 7-steps. These steps should stand you well in the seamless integration of environmental practices into the way you now do business.

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