

ISO 14001 DOCUMENT CONTROL (4.4.5)

In order to be in conformance with this provision of ISO 14001 an organization must be able to answer the overall question: “How do you maintain current and accurate documents?”. In order to answer that question the following specific tasks must be addressed under the Document Control section of the standard. First, the scope of the overall document control system needs to be defined. Second, within the control system there must be a document authorization or approval requirement. Third, the control system must maintain a revision tracking process. Fourth, the control system must be designed to ensure that the appropriate revisions are available at the workstations where they are employed. Fifth, out of date documents must be promptly removed from the workstation locations. Sixth, out of date documents that need to be archived for historical purposes need to be maintained in a separate location.

The primary purpose of the document control system is to insure that only the current approved documents are employed in the planning and operation of the environmental management system.

Questions That Need To Be Answered

The following questions will need to be answered in order to determine whether the Document Control Section meets the intent of ISO 14001:

1. Has the organization established procedures for controlling all of the documents required by the standard?
2. Does the procedure insure that all the documents can be located at the necessary workstations?
3. Are the following items addressed on each controlled document:
 - a. revision number
 - b. authorized signature
 - c. date of issuance
 - d. readily identified.
4. Does the organization maintain a current master list of authorized documents?
5. Does the organization maintain a process of removing out of date documents?