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Environmental Management Systems Overview

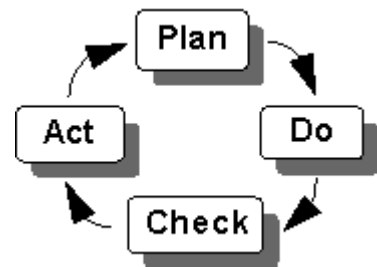


An Environmental Management System (EMS) is an organized and formal approach to managing environmental issues within an organization. It is based on the concept that environmental issues should be managed in the same way that an organization manages its core business functions and links the environmental concerns with economic considerations.

An effective EMS is built on Total Quality Management and Quality Management System concepts. To improve environmental management, focus should be not only on what things happen but also why they happen. Over time, the systematic identification and correction of system deficiencies leads to better environmental (and overall organizational) performance.

The EMS model leads to continual improvement based upon:

- *Planning*: such as identify environmental impacts that result from process operations; establish goals.
- *Doing*: such as environmental reduction projects or training.
- *Checking*: such as monitoring.
- *Acting*: such as management review and program adjustment.



The current regulatory system only addresses 20 percent of the environmental issues that an organization faces. An EMS can help address non-regulated issues as well, which can include:

energy efficiency, odor, traffic, etc. The EMS also can promote stronger operational control and employee stewardship.

Benefits of EMS

Many benefits may result from investing the time and resources to develop an EMS. Key factors to consider include:

- Improved compliance with federal, state and local regulations
- Improved environmental performance based on continual improvement (both regulatory and non-regulatory)
- Reduced environmental risk
- Reduced employee risk, fewer accidents in the workplace
- Reduced operational costs
- Conservation of resources
- Increased efficiency
- Increased employee involvement and understanding of their impacts on the environment
- Enhanced image with community, regulators, lenders and others
- Improved fulfillment of customer requirements and attract new customers
- Qualification for recognition or voluntary incentive programs (such as EPA Performance Track)

A realistic evaluation of the cost to develop and implement an EMS must also be taken into account. Internal resources will include staff time to develop the EMS and training of personnel. Consultants may need to be retained and, if an organization decides to pursue certification, there is a cost associated with the audit and review.

Elements of Environmental Management Systems



In this EMS model, the "Plan, Do, Check, Act" steps have been expanded into 17 elements that are linked together. These 17 elements are the basis of most EMS standards, including ISO 14001, the EMS standard created by the International Organization for Standardization.

Key Elements of an EMS: A Snapshot

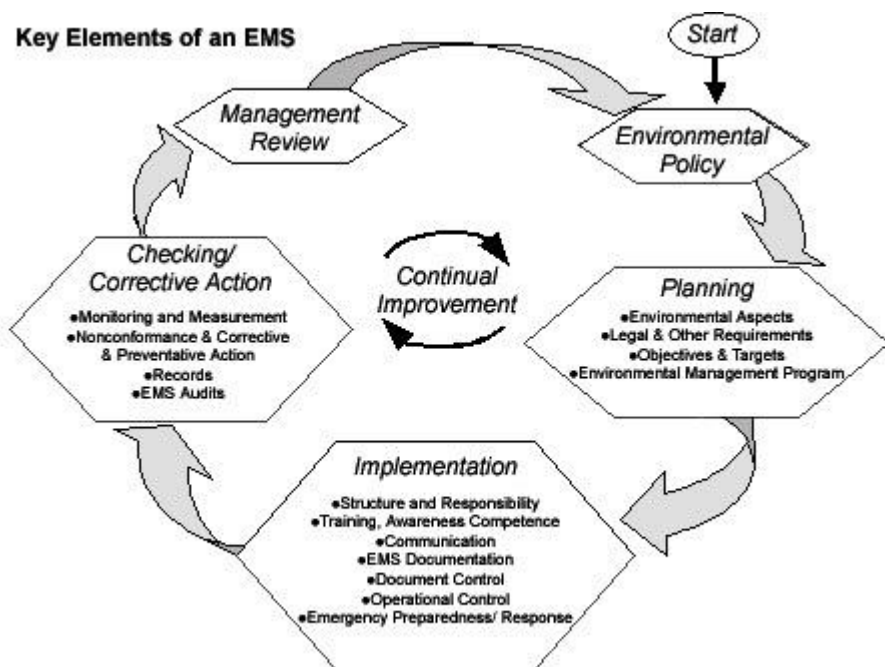
Environmental policy - Develop a statement of your organization's commitment to the environment. Use this policy as a framework for planning and action. The policy is a direct reflection of the fundamental values of the organization.

Environmental aspects - Identify environmental attributes of your products, activities and services. Determine those that could have significant impacts on the environment.

Legal and other requirements - Identify and ensure access to relevant laws and regulations, as well as other requirements to which your organization adheres.

Objectives and targets - Establish environmental goals for your organization, in line with your policy, environmental impacts, the views of interested parties and other factors.

Environmental management program - Plan actions necessary to achieve your objectives and targets.



Structure and responsibility - Establish roles and responsibilities for environmental management and provide appropriate resources.

Training, awareness and competence - Ensure that your organization's employees are trained and capable of carrying out their environmental responsibilities.

Communication - Establish processes for internal and external communications on environmental management issues.

EMS documentation - Maintain information on your organization's EMS and related documents.

Document control - Ensure effective management of procedures and other system documents.

Operational control - Identify, plan and manage your organization's operations and activities in line with your organization's policy, objectives and targets.

Emergency preparedness and response - Identify potential emergencies and develop procedures for preventing and responding to them.

Monitoring and measurement - Monitor key activities and track performance. Conduct periodic assessments of compliance with legal requirements.

Nonconformance and corrective and preventive action - Identify and correct problems and prevent their recurrence.

Records - Maintain and manage records of EMS performance.

EMS audit - Periodically verify that your organization's EMS is operating as intended.

Management review - Periodically review your organization's EMS with an eye to continual improvement.