



Quick Reference Guide

ISO 45003

Guidelines
Managing psychosocial risks
in the workplace



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INTRODUCTION

Workplaces routinely identify risks linked to physical safety. Some are minor such as tripping hazards and ergonomic work stations through to catastrophic risks which are life threatening. For many workplaces though, the same priority level is not applied to employee mental health and wellbeing

In June 2021, The International Organisation for Standardisation launched the ISO45003 Psychological Health and Safety at Work: Managing Psychosocial Risks in the Workplace (The Standard).

This is the first global standard providing guidance on the management of psychosocial risks and the promotion of wellbeing at work. It provides information on how to recognise psychosocial hazards with the potential to harm workers and offers example to help manage these.

The Standard, when implemented can help your organisation integrate psychosocial risk management processes into your existing Occupational, Health and Safety Management system. In doing so, you can adopt a sustainable approach to proactively addressing psychosocial risk in the workplace, demonstrate you are striving for best practice.

The ISO45003 is a child standard of the ISO45001 – Occupational Health and Safety. The ISO45001 mandates requirements and gives guidance on planning, implementing, reviewing, evaluating and improving work, health and safety management systems.

ISO45003 is not currently mandated but it can be adopted on a voluntary basis and used in conjunction with its parent standard. Dismissing The Standard may leave organisations open to negligence if they are aware of best practice and are not proactively working towards it.

Why is it important?

When psychosocial risk is not identified and mitigated effectively, there can be number of negative outcomes for both workers and the organisation.

Negative outcomes for workers can include:

- Poor health and associated conditions (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, anxiety, depression, sleep disorders)
- Poor health behaviours (unhealthy eating, substance misuse)
- Reduced job satisfaction, commitment and productivity

Negative outcomes for the organisation:

- Increased costs due to absence
- High turnover
- Reduced product or service quality
- Workplace investigations and compensation claims
- Damage to brand reputation

Additionally:

- It recognises the less obvious and less visible potential workplace health and safety issues including the very strong need to identify and prevent them.

Key definitions in the ISO 45003

1. Psychosocial risk

A combination of the likelihood of occurrence of exposure to work-related hazard(s) of a psychosocial nature and the severity of injury and ill-health that can be caused by these hazards.

Note: Psychosocial risks can come in many forms:

- How a person's work is organised
(i.e. role ambiguity, prolonged restructure, work overload or underload, insecure employment, fatigue)
- Social factors at work
(i.e. interpersonal conflict, insufficient reward and recognition, bullying, low supervisor support)
- Work environment and hazardous tasks
(i.e., inadequate equipment, excessive noise, extreme temperature)

2. Well-being at work

The fulfilment of the physical, mental, social and cognitive needs and expectations of a worker related to their work. Well-being at work can also contribute to the quality of life outside of work.

- The Standard is strong on its guidance of appropriate workplace systems and processes for recovery of psychosocial harms.
- It covers all levels of staff in an organisation and seeks to address some cultural lag in organisations which may downplay or stigmatise such workplace health and safety issues.
- The Standard is also driven by the very high costs, material and human, associated with such harms and reflects the effort to mitigate against rising health care system and government contribution costs.
- It allows you to meet and grow compliance capability and mitigate against a range of organisational risks.

What does it look like?

The ISO45003 has ten sections and three tables

1. Scope

2. Normative references

3. Terms and definitions

4. Context of the organisation:

- Understanding the organisation and its context
 - General
 - External issues
 - Internal issues
- Understanding the needs and expectations of workers and other interested parties
- Determining the scope of the OH&S management system
- OH&S Management system

5. Leadership and worker participation

- Leadership and commitment
- OH&S policy
- Organisational rules, responsibilities and authorities
- Consultation and participation of workers

6. Planning

- Actions to address risks and opportunities
- General
- Hazard identification and assessment of risks and opportunities
- Objectives to address psychosocial risk

7. Support

- Resources
- Competence
- Awareness
- Communication
- Documented information
 - General
 - Confidentiality

8. Operation

- Operational planning and control
- General
- Eliminating hazards, reducing OH&S risks and promoting wellbeing at work
 - Psychosocial risk control measures
 - Signs of exposure to psychological risk
- Management of change
- Procurement, contracting and outsourcing
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Rehabilitation and return to work

9. Performance evaluation

- Monitoring, measurement, analysis and performance evaluation
- Internal audit
- Management review

10. Improvement

- General
- Incident, nonconformity and corrective action
- Continual improvement

Table 1 – Aspects of how work is organised

- Roles and expectations
- Job control or autonomy
- Job demands
- Organisational change management
- Remote and isolated work
- Workload and work pace
- Working hours and schedule
- Job security and precarious work

Table 2 – Social factors at work

- Interpersonal relationships
- Leadership
- Organisational/workgroup culture
- Recognition and reward
- Career Development
- Support



- Supervision
- Civility and respect
- Work/life balance
- Violence at work
- Harassment
- Bullying and Victimisation

Table 3 – Work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks

How can we start on adopting and applying the ISO45003?

- Become familiar with the parent standard ISO45001.
- Make a preliminary assessment of your organisation. Mindseye Training & Consulting Mini Audit can assist with this process.
- Let your assessment incubate before rushing to fill the gaps.
- Inform decision makers
- Set up a discussion with an outside body or agency experienced in mental health and well being to go over your assessment for validation of gap analysis, training and other support.
- Create an internal working group representative of the organisation

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- Deconstruct the workload for ISO45003 into manageable chunks with realistic implementation timelines.
 - Put in place a clear and concrete and inclusive communication plan through out this process.
 - Commit to continuous improvement.

Like to talk further?

Many organisations will have partial aspects of the standard in place. To assist in deciding the most effective application of The Standard into your organisation Mindseye Training and Consulting can offer clients a preliminary ISO45003 gap analysis and audit

Helping organisations start or advance their adoption of the ISO45003, our consultants have undertaken foundation training in The Standard.