Update on the Proposed ISO 45001 Standard
Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

March 15, 2017

Update and Status – A View from the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the U.S. TAG

It seems like it’s been a long time since starting work on the proposed ISO 45001 Standard for Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems, which is under the ISO PC283 Committee. The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) serves as the TAG Administrator (Technical Advisory Group) to ANSI about this proposed standard.

Much of the discussion continues to address the future of the standard, the potential publishing schedule, and when will the next Draft International Standard (DIS) be released for review. The last ballot of the standard took place during May of 2016. Since this ballot the ISO PC283 Committee (actual global committee) focused on dispositioning 3,000 plus comments from PC 283 member countries over a series of meetings. The most recent meeting was held in Vienna during this past February.
The emphasis of the most recent meeting was on the resolution and disposition of the remaining comments and preparation of a second draft standard, (DIS #2 Draft International Standard. The TAG (Technical Advisory Group) membership is expecting to see the DIS2 draft standard in the near future (during this spring) and the TAG Administrator (ASSE) will work to expedite distribution of the document to the TAG for additional comments and discussion on the pending draft. The United States will have an opportunity to vote on the standard though ANSI as our voting organization at the ISO level. The TAG prepares the comments and voting position to ANSI for submission.

At this stage of the standards development process, we don’t expect to see new comments that have not been addressed in some way, form or fashion in the past. The exception could be the addition of new text that has been added because of the comment disposition process used in Austria. At this point, the TAG leadership is anticipating/hoping that much of our time will (or should) be spent on the annex materials. The annex materials provide an interpretation of existing requirements and their implementation. This is extremely important for the United States since it has been suggested that we need to begin focusing our attention less on changing the requirements but rather what the requirements mean and how it affects ISO 45,001 implementation within an organization.

With much of the requirements in place, as we’ve seen how they have played out with the PC 283, we now need to solicit your input and place much of our focus on the annex and the interpretation of these requirements.

Of additional importance to the TAG is the recent reaffirmation of the existing ANSI/ASSE Z10 Standard. In the recent past, you have seen numerous discussions take place addressing the future of Z10 versus the proposed ISO 45001 OHS Management Systems Standard. Both the committee and ASSE (Z10 Committee Secretariat) have reached consensus that the standard is of value to the OSH profession and helps protect workers. The standard has also received some global recognition and is viewed as one of the key base documents in the proposed ISO 45001 Standard. From the perspective of ISO 45001 we believe this is important since it shows the commitment to systems standards by the United States and what we believe will be increased synergy. It was also important to show organizations investing resources in management systems implementation that this investment is worthwhile and soon may have greater global impact.
We did want to take this opportunity to address several issues that have been consistently brought to our attention:

1. Do each of you believe there will be training programs addressing the proposed Standard?

The short answer is yes, and there will probably be a whole host of organizations and companies providing training and consultation on the standard. ASSE is offering training right now, and Vic has had the opportunity to be an instructor for its 45001 certificate program. To give you a feel for the interest in the interest, ASSE had told sold out seminars at SeminarFest with almost 100 total attendees. We were also pleasantly surprised that almost all of the attendees at the SeminarFest events were from business and industry as opposed to consultants and registrars. We have no concern with consultants and registrars since we will need them. But, the attendance mix is important to me as it is a good indicator of interest from business leaders and the OSH profession overall. Finally, our intent was not to create a commercial out of the question, but to note that training is taking place now, and you would be wise as an OSH professional to start your preparations.

2. From your joint perspective, will there be outsider certifying bodies and/or registrars performing certification (conformity assessment) against the standard once it is published?

In our opinion, the answer is an absolute “yes” and a number of these certification bodies are lining-up to be ready to offer services along the lines of what you often see with ISO 9000/9001 and ISO 14000/14001. From our perspective, conformity assessment activities can be a real asset in driving interest and implementation of the standard.

3. What is the future of OHSAS 18000/18001?

That has been a source of debate within the TAG and on the international level as well. Our opinion is that we will see some type of implementation system maintaining OHSAS for a specific period of time. At the conclusion of this time period we would/could then see OHSAS being withdrawn. We should note this is our personal view of the issue and only time will really tell after approval, publication, and use of the 45001 Standard.
4. Is there a schedule for the release and approval of the standard?

Of interest is that ISO recently released a revised publication schedule. But, please note this can change and is not set in stone. You can see the schedule for yourself via ISO by clicking on this site for the proposed new schedule.

5. What reaction are you seeing from American OSH Professionals and the global OSH community overall about the standard?

Interest has been very high and positive. A number of articles and materials have been released in the past several months discussing the standard and the positive impact it can have on the workplace. From our perspective, the global OSH community is positive about the pending standard and is very supportive of its implementation. Within ASSE interest is significant. An excellent article was published in the December 2016 ASSE Professional Safety Journal titled: “Applying ISO 45001 to Manage Ergonomics”. An excellent video was also released by the authors discussing implementation of 45001 and is worth your time to review.

Conclusion:

Perhaps you have seen from social media updates that the TAG is planning to meet in the Chicago area this upcoming May. We are setting aside three days to review the revised draft, put together any technical comments we may have, and finalize a voting position on the draft. Interested stakeholders can attend the meeting if they have interest and should contact the TAG administrator (ASSE) if they should need additional information.

We would also point out that ASSE has a website dedicated to the proposed ISO 45001 standard. We suggest you visit the site and we look forward to hearing any comments or insights you may have.

Finally, we hope you will be at the ASSE Professional Development Conference this June in Denver. There will be several sessions addressing the proposed standard and we will be available to respond to any questions or concerns you may have. Of note, is session #520 on Tuesday, June 20th where you’ll get an update and hear thoughts from the U.S. delegation of experts contributing to the development of ISO 45001.