

ISO 39001: TACKLING OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK

ISO 39001 is a new international standard designed to help vehicle fleet operators and others such as national governments adopt a structured and holistic approach to managing the risk of death and serious injury from road traffic. The standard sets out a harmonised, best practice method for fleet operators to manage road safety risks.

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BS ISO 39001 is a new standard which aims to encourage organisations to actively contribute to road traffic safety (RTS). By adopting the best-practice management framework set out in BS ISO 39001, businesses and enterprises can actively contribute to reducing the risk of death and serious injury from road traffic in areas within their sphere of influence.

The new standard is an invaluable tool for any organisation that recognises the advantages of implementing an occupational road safety management system, both for itself and its stakeholders. These include the organisation's employees, board and investors, customers and society at large.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Evidence clearly shows that the use of generic health and safety management systems – such as, for example, *BS OHSAS 18001, Occupational health and safety management systems – Requirements* – can bring business benefits. These include:

- Potentially lower insurance premiums
- A robust framework for identifying risks and putting measures in place to mitigate them
- Helping organisations to target their resources in the most cost effective way.

In addition, experience from around the world shows that large reductions in death and serious injury can be achieved by fleet operators adopting a holistic 'Safe System' approach to managing RTS. The Safe System approach is set out in the new BS ISO 39001, and recommended by all the main international organisations concerned with road safety. It involves organisations placing a clear and unequivocal focus on RTS results and taking evidence-based actions for the interim and long-term, supported by appropriate management resources.

The BS ISO 39001 standard provides a common, agreed best practice management framework for tackling road safety risks, both for governments and fleet operators. It compliments existing RTS programmes and



regulations, and sets out harmonised and state-of-the-art requirements for managing fleet safety. These are based on international expertise and applicable to all countries.

The standard is based on a process approach to encouraging continuous improvement, proven by successful ISO standards such as ISO 9001.

By adopting the structured, holistic approach set out in BS ISO 39001, organisations should be able to improve their RTS results beyond mere compliance with laws while contributing to society's wider goal of fewer road injuries and fatalities.

The management system specified in BS ISO 39001 is designed to help an organisation focus on its RTS objectives and targets, and guides the planning of RTS activities. Annex A provides some key guidance on the implementation of the standard, while annex B describes categories of RTS results, the Safe System approach and a framework for good practice RTS management, and shows how they can be aligned with BS ISO 39001. For fleet operators, for example, BS ISO 39001 helps

direct attention to addressing common, system-wide fatal and serious injury risk factors that they can influence. These include addressing areas such as:

- Safe speeds
- Driver impairment by alcohol, drugs or fatigue
- Use of appropriate safety equipment, such as seat belts and crash helmets
- Safe journey planning.

SAFETY RULES

The standard also emphasises the need to ensure that all employees who drive as part of their work comply with relevant rules on safe road use so that key risks are either eliminated or adequately managed. Fleet operators can also help reduce the risk of serious and fatal injuries through careful selection of vehicles and associated safety equipment, such as proven driver assistance technologies. As annex A outlines, "consumer programs test and publish safety ratings for many vehicle types and models which can be used by organisations to assist them in making informed decisions about the level of safety they seek in vehicle fleets."

Many organisations already have policies and procedures in place aimed at reducing occupational road risk, but the introduction of a specific standard in this area should encourage more fleet operators to adopt a comprehensive, focused and evidence-based approach to reducing road safety risks. In turn, this will benefit society as a whole and all organisations that use the road system, both here and abroad.

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