

Prioritize the well-being of your people

Elevating your occupational health and safety management system with ISO 45003

bsi.





ISO 45003 marks the first global standard to provide practical advice on managing psychological health and safety (H&S) and promoting well-being at work.

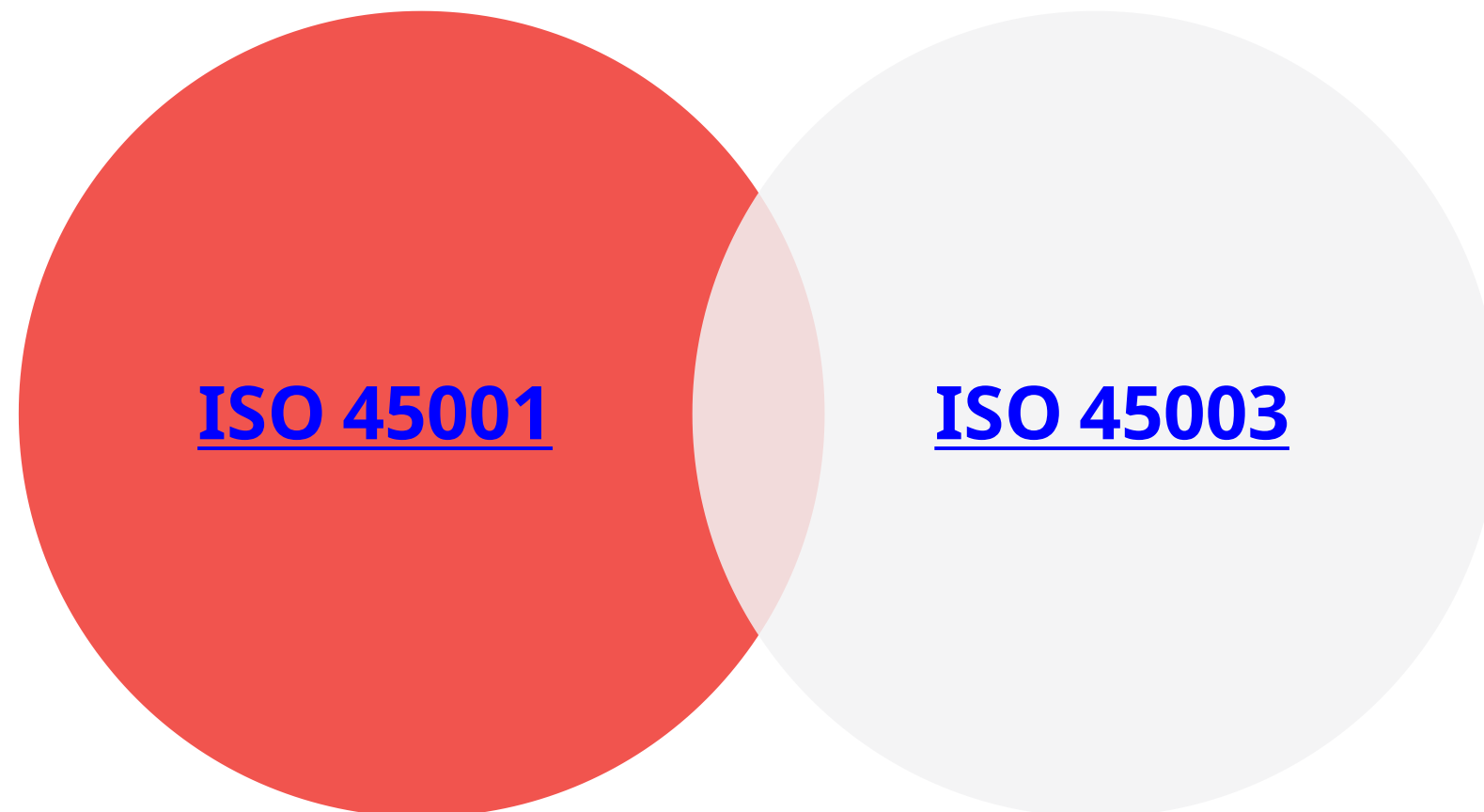
ISO 45003 enables you to expand on your existing ISO 45001-based occupational health and safety management system (OH&S MS) by enhancing the guidelines and requirements for psychological H&S at work.

Organizations who have already implemented or achieved ISO 45001 certification are in a strong position to adopt ISO 45003.

You've already implemented a high percentage of the protocols and requirements of ISO 45003 - either through implementation or certification to ISO 45001, or by meeting legal requirements in your region around health and safety.

This guide breaks down the clauses within ISO 45003 to show you how close you are to achieving certification based on steps you've already taken. Our experts have also provided you with some practical advice to help you bridge the gap to 100% readiness for ISO 45003 and accelerate progress towards a safer, more empowering future for your employees.

The relationship between ISO 45001 and ISO 45003



7 steps to ISO 45003 implementation

Before we explore the clauses of ISO 45003, see our top tips on how to create a seamless implementation process.

01

Get commitment and support from senior management

This will ensure that the necessary resources and support are available for the implementation of ISO 45003.

02

Engage the whole business with good internal communication

This will help to ensure that everyone in the organization understands the benefits of ISO 45003 and their role in its implementation.

03

Compare your existing ISO 45001 system with ISO 45003 requirements

This will help to identify the gaps that need to be filled in order to comply with the standard.

04

Establish an implementation team to get the best results

This team should be responsible for developing a plan for implementing ISO 45003 and overseeing its implementation.

05

Map out and share roles, responsibilities and timescales

This will help to ensure that everyone in the organization knows what they need to do and when they need to do it.

06

Develop a plan for implementing ISO 45003 including the following:

- The scope of the implementation
- The timeline for implementation
- The resources required for implementation
- The risks and challenges associated with implementation
- The benefits of implementing ISO 45003

07

Communicate the plan to all stakeholders

This includes employees, customers, suppliers, and investors.



The foundations of ISO 45003

Organizations need to have an OH&S MS implemented, covering the same scope as ISO 45003. It is not possible to effectively manage psychosocial risks, without managing “traditional” H&S risks, as they are inter-related. The OH&S MS would ideally be ISO 45001, however an alternative OH&S management system that clearly follows a PDCA (plan, do check, act) process is acceptable.

As ISO 45003 has been written to support ISO 45001, in some instances, organizations will have to show that they conform to the requirements of the relevant clause of ISO 45001, even if they do not use the whole standard for their OH&S management system.

In order to implement ISO 45003, it is critical to understand the scope of the definitions (Clause 3).

Definitions:

Psychosocial risk

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.

Well-being at work

Fulfilment of the physical, mental, social, and cognitive needs and expectations of a worker related to their work. Hazards of a psychosocial nature include aspects of work organization, social factors at work, work environment, equipment, and hazardous tasks.

ISO 45003 is not a standard on well-being per se. Effective workplace well-being is impossible without managing psychological health and safety. If you manage psychosocial risk, then you can create the right conditions for workplace well-being. If your organization has well-being initiatives, you will need to align these to the ISO 45003 definition of workplace well-being.

While you may decide not to use the term ‘psychosocial risk’ in your general internal communications, it is important that top management and line managers have been introduced to this terminology; and that they understand that there are psychosocial hazards which can cause physical, mental and cognitive harm. We suggest watching [this video](#) to understand more.

Upcoming clauses:

Clause 4: **Context**

Clause 5: **Leadership**

Clause 6: **Planning**

Clause 7: **Support**

Clause 8: **Operation**








Clause 9: **Performance**

Clause 10: **Improvement**

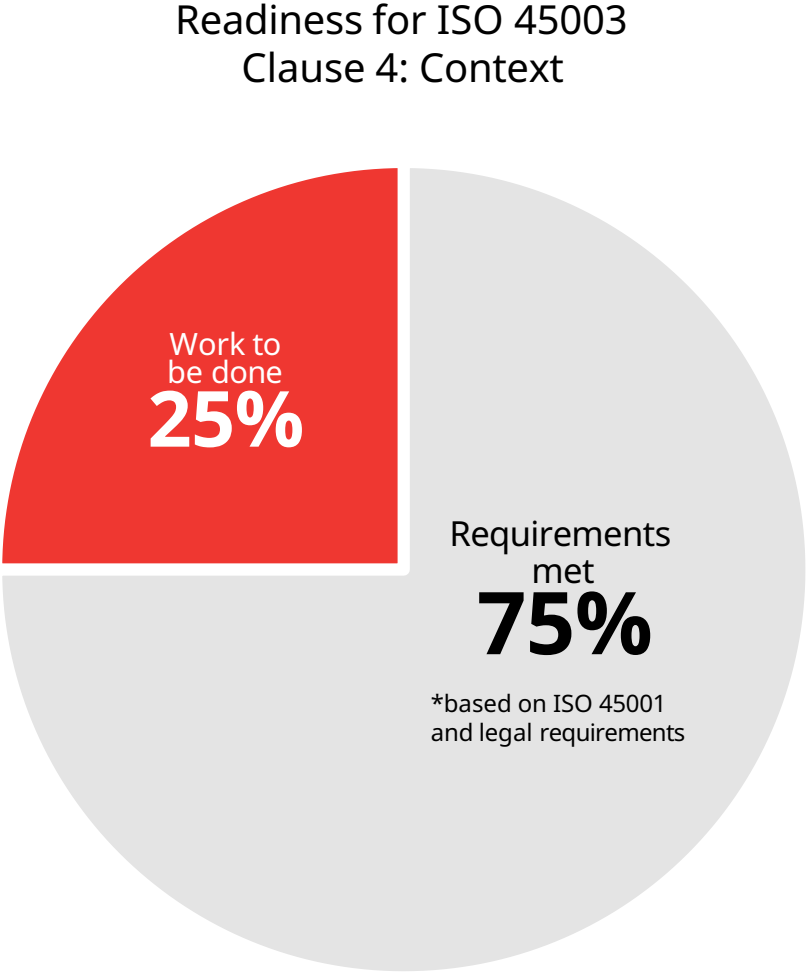
Clause 4: Context

This clause is very similar to Clause 4 in ISO 45001. You will simply need to review your internal and external issues identified in ISO 45001 and ensure that those listed in ISO 45003 are covered; likewise for needs and expectations.

Clause requirements:

-  Determine external and internal issues and needs and expectations of interested parties
-  Consider which of those needs and expectations may have legal or other implications
-  Adjust the design of activities to manage psychosocial risk
-  Tailor activities to improve the process of managing psychosocial risks
-  Determine how the assessment of psychosocial risks will be used to make effective actions plans
-  Confirm that the scope of the OH&S MS specifically addresses psychosocial risk
-  Ensure that OH&S MS remains appropriate, effective and relevant with respect to the management of psychosocial risk

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're 75% of the way there with Clause 4.**





Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 4

Moving from 75% to 100% readiness

There are three additional requirements in ISO 45003 you will need to consider:

- Adjust the design of activities to manage psychosocial risk
- Tailor activities to improve the process of managing psychosocial risks
- Determine how the assessment of psychosocial risks will be used to make effective actions plans

ISO 45003 is about organizational action to address organizational risks. Therefore, failure to demonstrate robust evidence against the points above would undermine the intended results of an OH&S MS.






An effective OH&S MS needs continual improvement; the management of psychosocial risk is not static and will need regular review to ensure that it is still effective.



Clause 5: Leadership

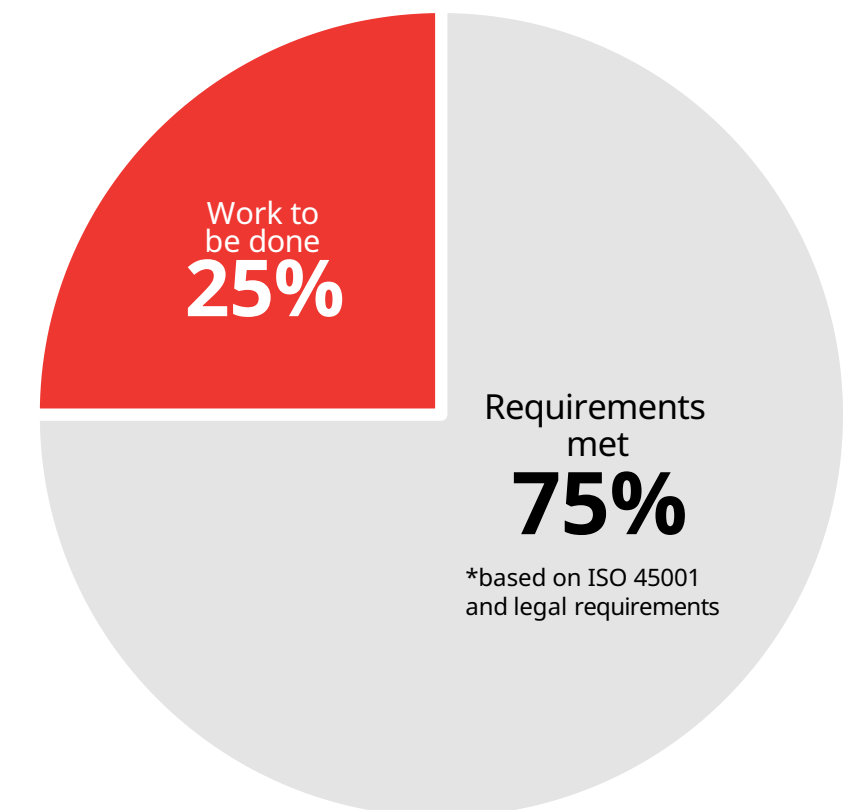
The basic principles of this clause are the same as Clause 5 in ISO 45001 but explicit additional action with regard to psychosocial risks and promotion of well-being is needed. You can also easily adapt the OH&S policies you developed for ISO 45001.

Clause requirements:

-  Demonstrate leadership and commitment to managing psychosocial risk and promoting well-being
-  Identify, monitor and be aware of roles and responsibilities with regard to psychosocial risks
-  Include managing psychosocial risk in strategic plans, existing systems, processes and reporting structures
-  Protect workers from reprisals and communicate how whistle-blowers, victims and witnesses can report and will be protected
-  Obtain feedback on the effectiveness of managing and preventing psychosocial risk, ensuring competency and empowering workers, removing barriers and enhancing participation

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're 75% of the way there with Clause 5.**

Readiness for ISO 45003
Clause 5: Leadership



Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 5

Moving from 75% to 100% readiness

- To meet ISO 45003 requirements, you'll need to **examine the sustainability of managing psychosocial risk by including it in strategic plans and existing systems, processes and reporting structures.**
- Additional **protections around reporting and additional mechanisms for participation are required**, as ISO 45003 recognizes that there may be additional barriers associated with the stigma or discrimination in relation to psychological ill-health.
- The OH&S policy developed for ISO 45001 can easily be adapted. **In addition to a commitment to prevent ill-health and injury, the policy should make explicit reference to psychosocial risk and the promotion of well-being at work plus dignity, respect, confidentiality and trust.** These latter points relate to culture and the behaviours of people within the organization. This is the first indirect reference to creating an inclusive organization – and the first hint we see of the overlap between psychosocial risks and equity, diversity and inclusion and creating fair and respectful workplaces.
- **The roles and responsibilities for psychosocial risk management should be clarified by top management, and workers at all* levels should take responsibility for psychosocial risk they have control over.** *Remember 'worker' includes top management, managerial and non-managerial persons (Note 2 under definition of worker in ISO 45001). ISO 45003 cannot be implemented effectively and deliver the required outcomes, without these functions working together.
- **The consultation and participation must reflect the diversity of your organization's workforce,** for instance suitable gender and ethnic representation. You also need to include all functions and worker levels (including other interested parties such as contractors).










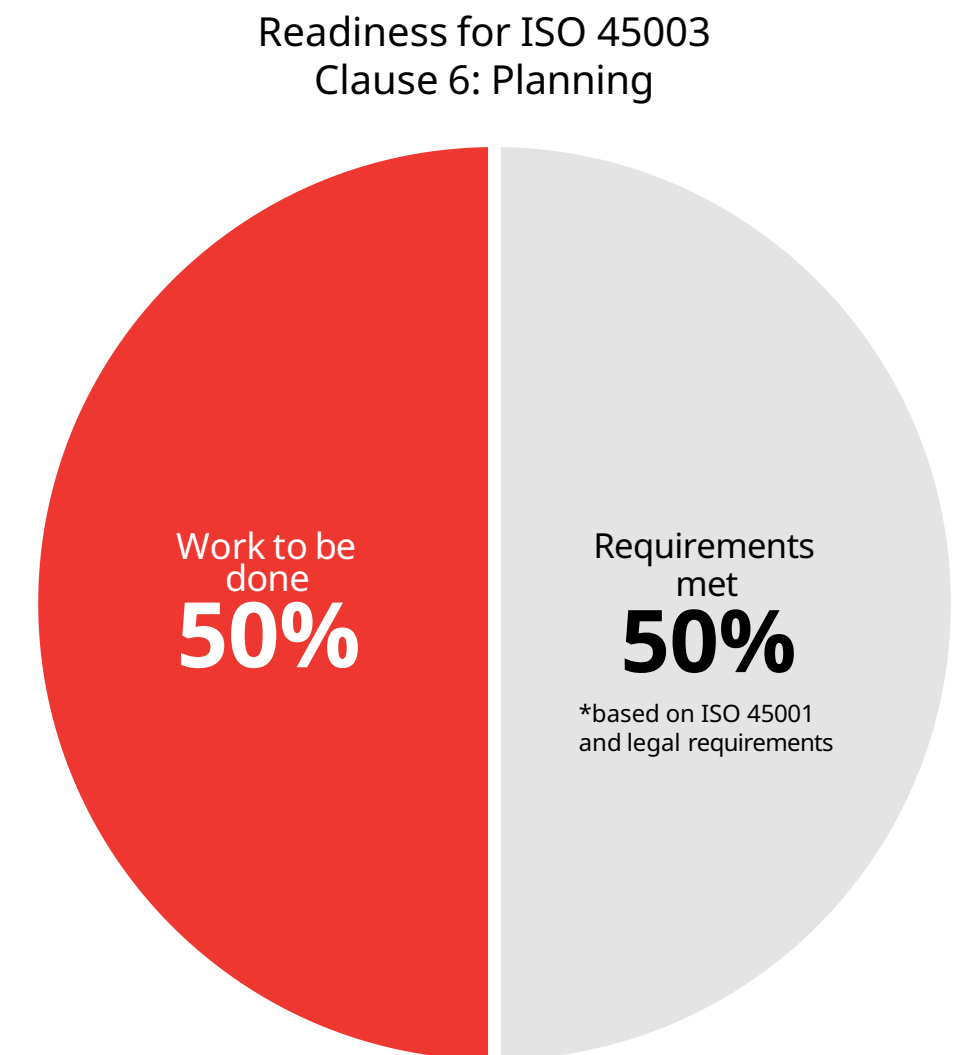
Clause 6: Planning

The fundamental principles of ISO 45003 are the same as ISO 45001 Clause 6.1.1 and are approached in the same way. However, there are risks, objectives and requirements that are unique to ISO 45003 which you will need to pay close attention to, particularly when it comes to planning, hazard identification and assessment of risks and opportunities.

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're 50% of the way there with Clause 6.**

Clause requirements:

-  Determine risks and opportunities that need to be addressed including psychosocial hazards, prevention of injury and ill-health and return to work strategies
-  Your planning establishes objectives and determines how to achieve them, fulfils legal and other requirements and shows a commitment to continual improvement
-  Your planning takes account of the needs and expectations of particular groups, and the needs of specific workplaces or tasks
-  Your planning uses the results of risk assessment to understand underlying causes
-  You implement and evaluate actions to eliminate or reduce psychosocial hazards



Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 6

Moving from 50% to 100% readiness

Ensure that the explicit points from ISO 45003 are covered, paying particular attention to **strategies for return to work and promotion of well-being** which are not part of ISO 45001.

- There is not a separate clause in ISO 45003 for determining legal and other requirements, instead it is wrapped into general planning.
- **ISO 45003 sets out three tables of psychosocial hazards - organizations should work through these lists rigorously.** Sources for identifying risk are likely to include data not used in ISO 45001 such as employee survey results, exit interviews, holiday leave and overtime data. In addition, you must understand the underlying sources of harm. If your organization does not understand this, the effectiveness of control measures (actions) taken to eliminate or reduce the harm may be undermined.

- It is also important to understand that **psychosocial hazards often interact with each other and other hazards.** For instance, the long working hours hazard, may be related to bullying and harassment (forcing people to work long hours); long working hours may lead to fatigue which in turn may lead to human error which may lead to an accident; or may cause an accident in itself such as falling asleep at the wheel.
- **Assessing risk needs to include details of who will be harmed, taking into account that different groups may be impacted in different ways;** How often does the harm arise (likelihood); What are the likely consequences (harm) - taking into account acute v. chronic - remember psychosocial risks often accumulate over months, or even years, as well as processes for dynamic risk e.g. during change.
- For OH&S objectives, it is pulled out slightly differently to ISO 45001. **Objective setting starts at the beginning of this clause and then concludes in this clause.**










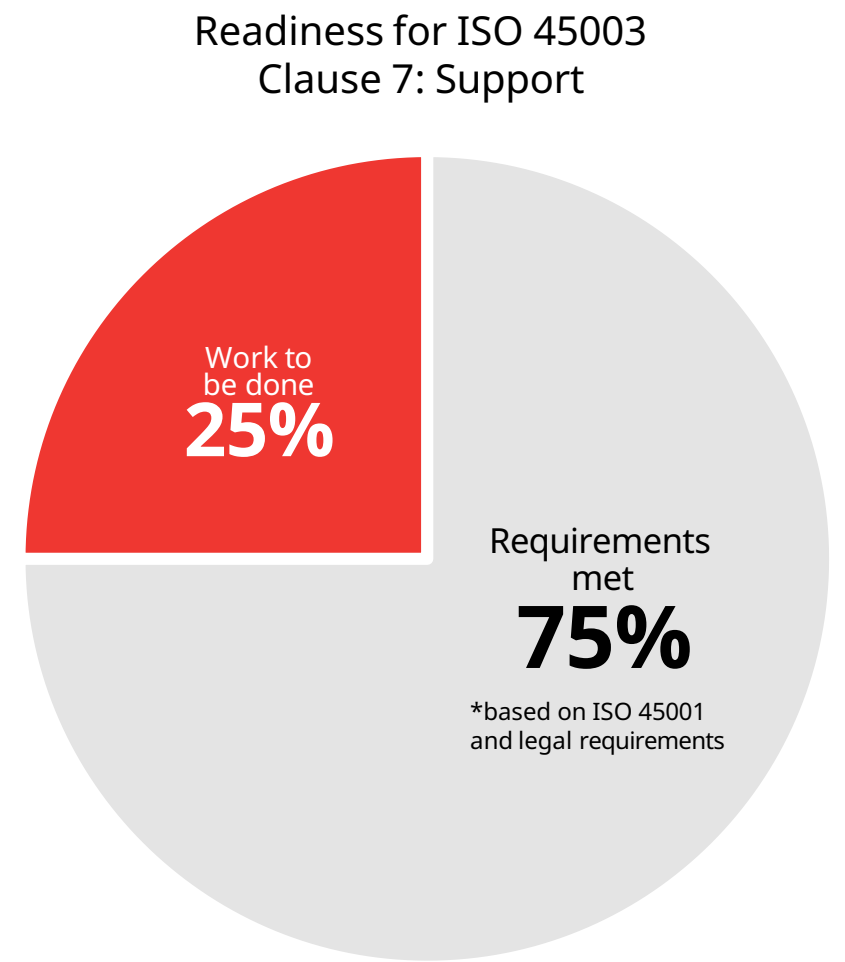
Clause 7: Support

Overall, this clause is very similar to Clause 7 in ISO 45001 but there are some specific areas to ensure effective competence and awareness. There are also many more prescriptive documentation requirements.

Clause requirements:

-  Develop the competence to identify psychosocial hazards and manage psychosocial risks, taking into account workers' needs, language, literacy and diversity
-  Inform workers of workplace factors that can affect health, safety and well-being; or factors that threaten creating stigma or discrimination
-  Take into account the importance of top management support and protection from reprisals for reporting
-  Communication provides opportunities for feedback; and outlines the development of processes to manage psychosocial risk
-  Documented information includes processes for managing psychosocial risk; and details of roles and responsibilities

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're 75% of the way there with Clause 7.**



Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 7

Moving from 75% to 100% readiness

When it comes to developing competence, pay particular attention to the specifics of this clause in ISO 45003: identifying and implementing controls for psychosocial risk; reporting and raising concerns across workforce; evaluation of effectiveness of competence; language, literacy and diversity; and competency for top management and line managers.

The UK HSE has a line manager competency tool which can be very helpful:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mcit.htm>

- With regard to **awareness and developing a positive health, safety and well-being (HSW) culture**, you'll need to consider: The factors that can affect 'well-being', as well as health and safety as well as any stigma or discrimination that may arise (this is key link with diversity and inclusion and creating fair and respectful workplaces); Top management's role in protection from reprisals when reporting (culture of organization); Sharing experience and best practice.

- **ISO 45003 includes a more explicit list of 'what' to communicate to workers as effective communication is an essential part of psychological health and safety management.**
- **The specific requirements set out for documented requirements are more prescriptive than in ISO 45001.** Additionally, there is a sub-clause covering confidentiality. The organization should establish processes for confidentiality concerning psychosocial risk and any relevant legal requirements. In many countries there are not only laws in relation to the handling and storage of personal data but also laws regarding how to store, and how long to keep, workplace health records.
- Additional information on the types of documented information that may be relevant can be found in [BSI ISO 45002-1:2023](#) on managing occupational health.










Clause 8: Operation

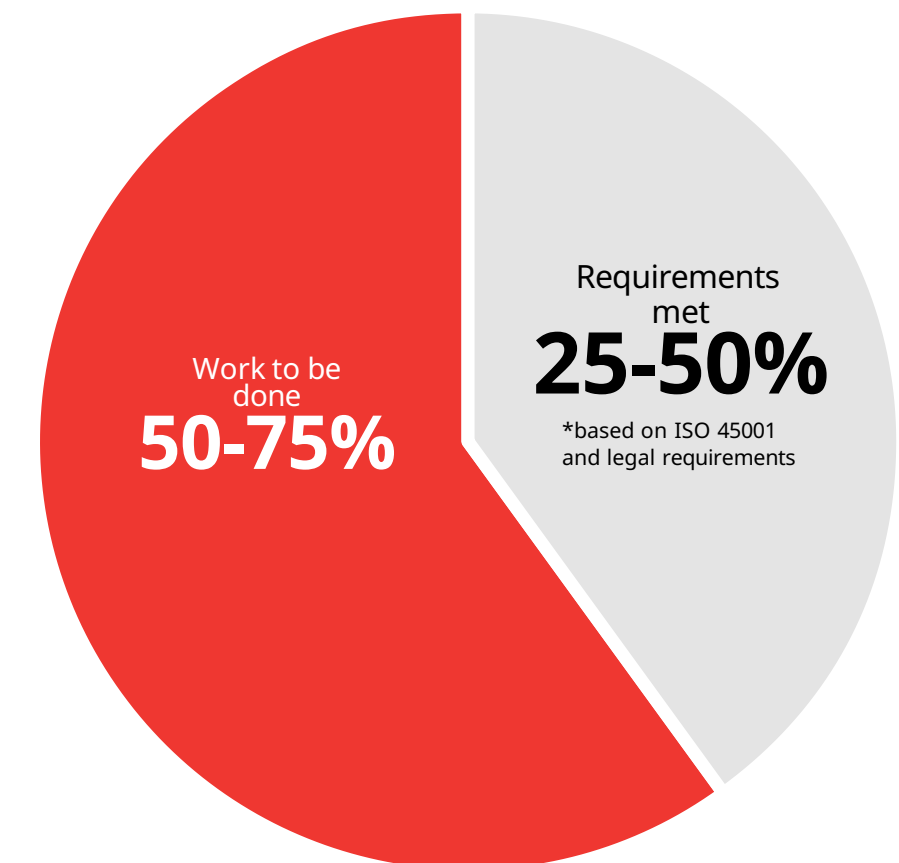
While there are likely to be legal requirements that you are already complying with that will help you implement this clause, Clause 8 will require you to implement brand new processes that haven't been established during ISO 45001 implementation.

Clause requirements:

-  Plan, implement, control and maintain processes to adequately and effectively manage psychosocial risks and new opportunities
-  Complete an assessment of psychosocial risks, taking into account existing controls, following the principle of the hierarchy of controls
-  Use primary, secondary and tertiary interventions (keeping people healthy, mitigating effects and providing support, respectively)
-  Eliminate hazards and reduce risks, implementing control measures for psychosocial risks related to work organization
-  Implement and maintain processes to communicate and control changes that can impact health, safety and well-being at work, involving workers at an early stage

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're between 25%-50% of the way there with Clause 8.**

Readiness for ISO 45003
Clause 8: Operation



Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 8

Moving from 25-50% to 100% readiness

- **Psychosocial risk assessments can be approached in the same way as other health and safety risks.** Controls should focus on prevention by designing out risk, accounting for dynamic risk during change, and developing a comprehensive and long-term strategy.
- As with ISO 45001, **ISO 45003 focuses on elimination first and then reducing and mitigating remaining risks.** For health risks, and in particular psychosocial risks, a different 'hierarchy of control' is used:

1. Primary (keeping people healthy):

Controls to eliminate, prevent or reduce. This would be aligned to elimination, substitution and engineering controls from ISO 45001. In addition, in ISO 45003 this intervention includes the promotion of well-being.

2. Secondary (mitigating effects):

Resources to raise awareness and competency and other measures (such as policies). This would align to administrative controls and PPE from the hierarchy of controls in ISO 45001.

3. Tertiary (provide support):

Reducing the harmful effects through support, corrective actions and rehabilitation programmes.






This is not a level of control that is explicit in the hierarchy of controls in ISO 45001, however many organizations recognize that this is an important part of an effective management system and will have mechanisms in place. Additionally, there are often legal requirements about this and organizations will have to have some provision to meet their legal (and other e.g. employment) obligations.



- Aligning to ISO 45001, **ISO 45003 has three clauses covering change, procurement and emergencies.** Each of these elements introduce psychosocial risk factors that need to be considered as part of the overall management of psychological health and safety.
- There is a new clause on rehabilitation and return to work within ISO 45003. BS 45002-1 "Guidance on managing occupational health" provides a good practice framework for occupational health, which is often where rehabilitation and return to work activities sit.





To achieve certification to BSI's Psychological Health and Safety at Work, evidence of conformance to specifics set out in ISO 45003 must be in place plus the following minimum criteria:

-  Recording and monitoring sickness absence to help you identify trends and manage risk
-  Train managers on how to manage sickness absence and return to work to processes, including when to seek support from others such as HR, health and safety and/or occupational health professionals
-  Processes for keeping in regular contact with workers who are off sick, at agreed intervals
-  Seek professional advice on fitness to work and workplace adjustments – this may need a coordinated team approach between health and safety and/or occupational health and/or medical professionals
-  Identification of any workplace adjustments that would help the worker return to work

-  Agree a return to work plan and coordinate the return to work, keeping the plan under review and adapting it as necessary
-  Review any health and safety risk assessment where:
 - A worker's health condition makes them or others more vulnerable to workplace risks
 - The impact of the workplace adjustments could affect the work and health of others
 - There is reason to believe that the original risk assessment was ineffective e.g. the psychosocial risk that has caused the absence has not been identified

Note: BS 45002-1 "Guidance on managing occupational health" provides a good practice framework for occupational health, which is often where rehabilitation and return to work activities sit.








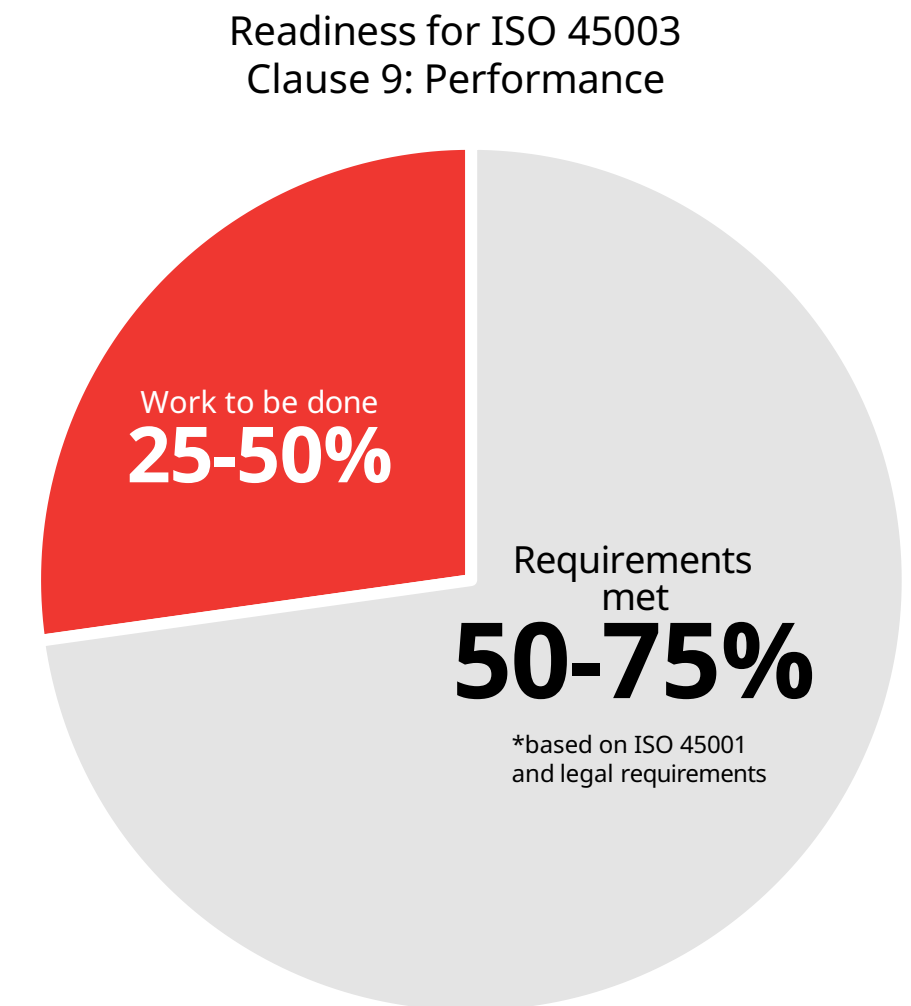
Clause 9: Performance

The principles of performance evaluation, internal audit and management review recommended in ISO 45003 are consistent with those set out in ISO 45001. However, the focus in ISO 45003 is on psychosocial hazards and there are some important additions you will need to include.

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're between 50%-75% of the way there with Clause 9.**

Clause requirements:

-  Systematically monitor and measure activities related to managing psychosocial risk and the performance of the OH&S MS
-  Maintain, monitor, review and revise as necessary the control measures for psychosocial risks to ensure they remain effective
-  Establish KPIs and collect and analyse relevant data, with leading indicators allowing for prediction of future performance
-  Conduct internal audits, using the findings to assess the effectiveness of the management of psychosocial risks, and identifying gaps in performance for opportunities to continually improve
-  Top management reviews the organization's management of psychosocial risk, using the results from the analysis and evaluation during the management review



Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 9

Moving from 50-75% to 100% readiness

- When evaluating performance, you'll need to “provide data on activities related to psychosocial health and safety” as these will form the basis for decisions about improvements.
- This clause includes a **review and revision of control measures** to ensure they remain effective, with four recommendations for review criteria:
 1. New hazard
 2. Control measure not adequate
 3. Before change
 4. Where workers request it/consultation indicates it is necessary
- ISO 45003 is explicit in **recommendations for the type of measures and key performance indicators** referring to both quantitative and qualitative measures and leading and lagging indicators. ISO 45003 is also more explicit with regard to the consultation and participation of workers in developing the measures.
- **Internal audit findings should be used to assess the effectiveness of the management of psychosocial risk and identify gaps in performance** and management reviews to ensure that top management remains “informed on psychosocial risk performance on a regular basis and the extent to which the organization has met its policy and objectives for the management of psychosocial risks.”









Clause 10: Improvement

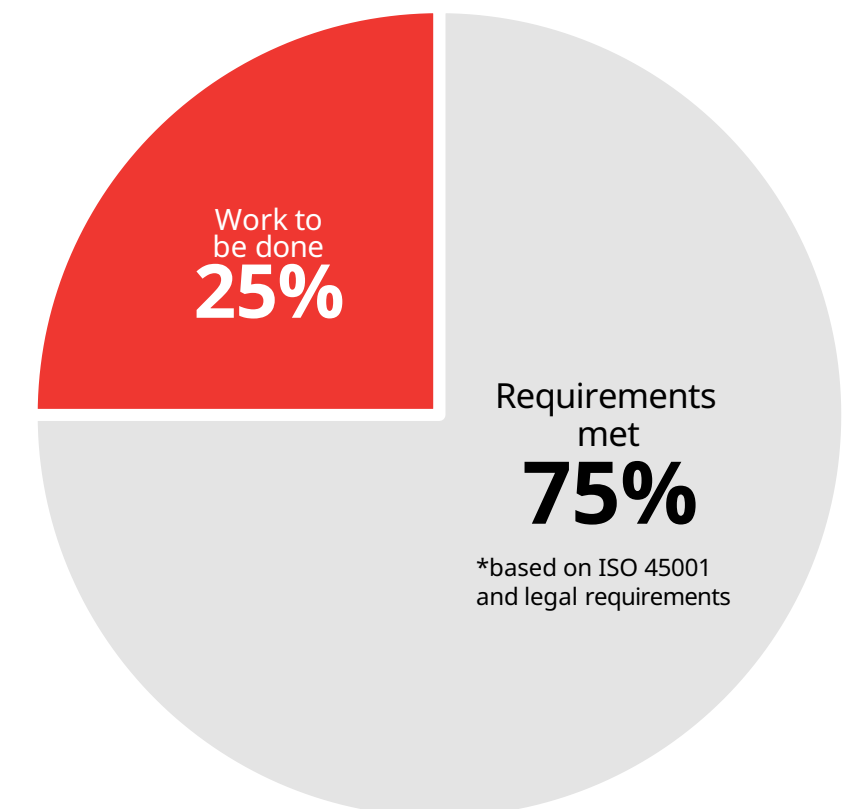
The processes established for continual improvement in ISO 45001 are likely to be suitable for ISO 45003, however there will be a renewed focus on organizations creating a culture that proactively improves psychological health, safety and well-being.

Clause requirements:

-  Implement actions to continually improve the OH&S MS and performance in relation to psychosocial risk
-  Implement a process to address nonconformities and incidents related to psychosocial risk
-  Gather information on the opportunities for improvement in the management of psychosocial risks, fulfilment of its legal and other requirements, and achievement of its OH&S objectives
-  Evaluate opportunities to implement changes and give priority to those that have the greatest potential for improving psychological health, safety and well-being in the workplace

The steps you've taken during ISO 45001 implementation and the legal requirements you are complying with means **you're 75% of the way there with Clause 10.**

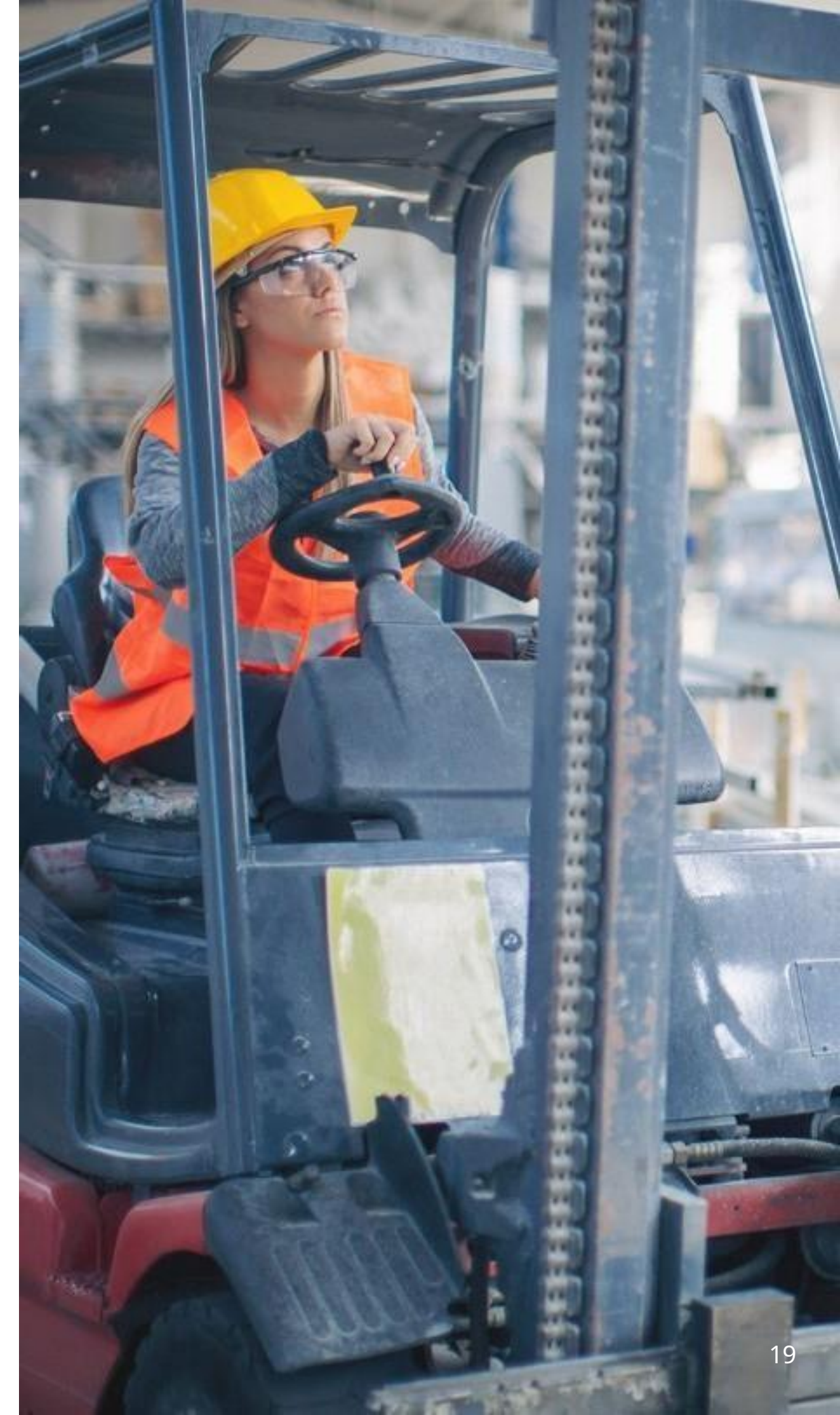
Readiness for ISO 45003
Clause 10: Improvement



Next steps for implementing ISO 45003 Clause 10

Moving from 75% to 100% readiness

- Clause 10.1 sets out outcome information that should be taken into account and importantly states that **the “organization should evaluate the effectiveness of improvement actions.”**
- Clause 10.2 reflects that **psychosocial nonconformities and incident investigation may require special arrangements given their possible sensitive and confidential nature** and restates the need to create reporting mechanisms that reduce fear of reprisals.
- BS 45002-3 “Guidance on incident investigation” provides a good practice **framework for incident investigation** and BSI offers a one-day training course on incident investigation.
- In Clause 10.3 the organization should **actively seek out opportunities for improvement in relation to psychosocial risks and prioritize actions that will have the greatest improvement for psychological health, and also well-being.**



How ISO 45003 supports the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

This standard contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals: 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16.

Organizations that are committed to sustainability are increasingly aligning their corporate strategies to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ISO 45003 demonstrates an organization's commitment to ensuring decent work conditions, health and well-being.

For organizations seeking to enhance their ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) profile, implementation of ISO 45003 and its alignment to the SDGs sends a powerful message to shareholders and stakeholders including employees, that they truly care for their people.





Why choose BSI:

BSI shapes, shares and embeds best practice, so that organizations can become future ready – by being trusted, resilient and ready to succeed in our ever-changing world. We are the world leader in developing standards to maximize the value of an organization’s most important asset – their people.

BSI is proud to hold the Secretariat of the ISO Technical Committee that has developed the first international guidance standard on managing psychological health and safety at work – ISO 45003. In the development process the Committee have worked with experts in H&S to bring together global best practice and distil their knowledge into this new standard.

Find out more about ISO 45003 and how it relates to our complete range of health, safety and well-being solutions [here](#).

HSW best practice is in our DNA

BSI has pioneered standards on topics including valuing people, occupational health and safety management, fire safety management and competency, smart working, pandemic safe working and face coverings, to name a few.

We are your trusted partner, committed to improving the health, safety and well-being of your organization. We demonstrate this through our BSI Kitemark™ certification – the ultimate Mark of Trust. Exclusive to BSI and established for over a century, Kitemark™ certification is recognized by organizations from around the world. It can help you access new markets and give buyers confidence in your products and services.

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