

ISO NEWS

NEW: ISO 14001:2026

New Standard Released

The ISO 14001:2026 standard has now been released, introducing strengthened expectations around climate awareness, lifecycle thinking, leadership involvement and change management. These updates are designed to help organisations respond more effectively to evolving environmental and sustainability challenges

We've got you covered

All Ley Hill consultants have successfully completed ISO 14001:2026 transition training, ensuring we are fully up to date with the latest requirements of the revised standard. This means our team is well placed to provide informed, practical advice and effective support to help clients transition smoothly and with confidence. Changes to the standard are subtle, but require a new way of thinking.

Here's how we can help

✓ **Readiness Assessment**

A focused, one-off review of your current EMS against the new standard. You'll receive a clear roadmap to compliance.

✓ **Integrated Transition Support**

All support provided to existing clients on maintenance programmes, as well as any new implementation projects, will be delivered in line with the ISO 14001:2026 standard.



Important

Although the formal transition period is **three years**, Certification Bodies commonly use recertification audits as the practical transition point.

Organisations should not delay discussions with their Certification Body about transitioning to the new standard and should begin **preparations early**. Leaving the transition to the last minute may result in limited auditor availability, which could ultimately lead to the **expiration of your certificate**.

At a Glance: ISO 14001:2026 Updates

Minor but helpful changes

- Cosmetic and layout updates
- Updated references
- Improved alignment with other ISO management system standards
- Additional clarification notes to support implementation
- Terminology updates:
 - “Result” is now used to describe the outcome of a process or objective
 - “Fulfilment” is strengthened, placing greater emphasis on actually meeting compliance obligations

These changes improve clarity and consistency, but the real impact lies in the more substantial updates below.



Clause	Change & Impact
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4: Context of Organisation	<p>Stronger focus on environmental conditions</p> <p>Organisations must now explicitly consider environmental conditions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Pollution levels • Natural resource availability • Ecosystem health • Biodiversity
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Scope requirements tightened

- The EMS scope must be documented and available to interested parties
- It is now much harder to exclude operations that have an environmental impact
- Previously excluded sites and operations may not now be ignored when taking a life cycle approach to products and services
- Organisations must consider their authority and ability to control or influence impacts across the life cycle of activities and products

***What this means?** Expect more scrutiny of how your organisation defines its boundaries and responsibilities.*

5: Leadership	<p>Culture, ownership, and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders are expected to actively lead environmental performance, not just support the EMS • Environmental responsibility must extend across all relevant roles • Organisations must demonstrate a culture focused on environmental protection
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Externally provided processes and services

- Outsourced processes, products, or services now fall firmly within the EMS
- Organisations must show control and influence, even where activities are provided externally

Environmental policy

- The policy must go beyond a general commitment to protection. It must address specific environmental areas relevant to the organisation’s context

***What this means?** Leadership involvement must be visible, meaningful, and evidence-based.*

Clause	Change & Impact
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6:
Planning

Risks and opportunities brought into sharp focus

- New emphasis on identifying risks and opportunities linked to:
 - Environmental aspects
 - Environmental impacts
- An explicit risk register is now expected

Life cycle perspective throughout

- Organisations must consider environmental impacts across the entire life cycle
- This includes how externally provided services affect environmental performance

Managing change

- A new clause dedicated to planning changes that affect the EMS
- Change management is now a recurring theme throughout the standard

***What this means?** Environmental planning must be more structured, forward-looking, and responsive to change.*

7:
Support

No formal clause changes – but expectations have increased

With the stronger life cycle focus:

- Organisations may rely on data from suppliers and partners
- This raises questions of data reliability and consistency

Key examples:

- Communication (7.4.1): Information shared must be consistent and reliable
- Competence (7.2): People affecting environmental performance must be supported with accurate, high-quality data

***What this means?** Supplier information, competence, and communication will face closer examination.*

8:
Operation

Operational controls unchanged – but clarified

Environmental aspects must now clearly consider operating conditions under:

- Normal conditions
- Abnormal conditions
- Potential emergency situations

Emergency preparedness refined

- Greater emphasis on actual emergencies
- Prevention and mitigation should already be addressed during aspect identification

Important terminology update

- “Potential” emergency situations replaces “foreseeable”

Understanding the difference:

- Potential = something could happen (possible, even if unlikely)
- Foreseeable = something reasonably predictable

***What this means?** Organisations must think broader about what could happen, not just what is likely.*

Clause	Change & Impact
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9&10:

Performance
Evaluation &
Improvement

Audits

- Every audit must have a defined objective
- Increased focus on:
 - Environmental objectives
 - Measurable achievements

Management review

- Management review is now more structured, covering three distinct areas:
 - A clear understanding of significant environmental impacts
 - Consideration of both positive and negative effects
 - Robust data and documentation to support decision-making

***What this means?** Data quality, insight, and evidence are critical, and climate-related information will play an increasing role.*

Preparing for ISO 14001:2026

The 2026 update reinforces a clear message:

Environmental management must be integrated, evidence-based, life-cycle focused, and led from the top.

Organisations should start by:

- Reviewing their EMS scope and boundaries
- Strengthening leadership involvement
- Enhancing risk-based planning
- Improving data quality, especially from suppliers
- Ensuring change management is built into the EMS

Need support preparing for ISO 14001:2026?

Early understanding and proactive planning will make the transition smoother, more effective, and more valuable for your organisation.

Talk to us today.



STAY INFORMED | REVIEW YOUR CURRENT SYSTEMS | PLAN EARLY | TALK TO US FOR SUPPORT

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