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**Occupational health and safety
management — General guidelines
for safe working during the COVID-19
pandemic**



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 283, *Occupational health and safety management*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

This document is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased risk this disease presents to the health, safety and well-being of people in all settings, including those working at home or in mobile settings, and workers and other interested parties in physical workplaces.

Governments, regulators and other professional bodies across the world have published guidance on working safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document provides a single generic set of guidelines that complements this information and supports the principles that:

- reasonable measures to manage the risks arising from COVID-19 are, or will be, implemented to protect the health and safety of workers and other relevant interested parties;
- workers should not be required to work unless these measures have been implemented.

This guidance includes practical recommendations to organizations and workers on how to manage these risks and is suitable for organizations resuming operations, those that have been operational throughout the pandemic, and those that are starting operations.

The guidance is generic and applicable to organizations regardless of the nature of business, service provision, size or complexity. It recognizes that many smaller organizations do not have dedicated departments for functions such as occupational health and safety (OH&S), facilities management or human resources. More detailed information for specific functions is available from professional bodies and a wide range of national and international standards.

By implementing the guidance in this document, the organization will be able to:

- a) take effective action to protect workers and other relevant interested parties from the risks related to COVID-19;
- b) demonstrate that it is addressing risks related to COVID-19 using a systematic approach;
- c) put in place a framework to enable effective and timely adaptation to the changing situation.

Organizations using ISO 45001 can use this document to inform their OH&S management system by relating the relevant clauses to the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, as outlined below. Taking a systems approach facilitates the coordination of resources and efforts that is so important in managing COVID-19.

- Plan: Plan what needs to be done for the organization to work safely (see [Clauses 4 to 8](#)).
- Do: Do what the organization has planned to do (see [Clauses 9 to 12](#)).
- Check: See how well it is working (see [Clause 13](#)).
- Act: Fix problems and look for ways to make what the organization is doing even more effective (see [Clause 14](#)).

This document is not intended to be a single step-by-step set of recommendations. It provides a framework in which the PDCA cycle outlined above should be repeated, with all parts active at all times, to enable ongoing continual improvement and to ensure the organization responds to changes during the different phases of the pandemic.