

Using Management Systems to Address Environmental, Health and Safety Issues in the Federal Government

Managing the environmental and health and safety considerations of the federal government is a critical component of the Administration's commitment to being good stewards of our nation's natural resources. Realizing this task takes commitment and investment of time and effort. So the more efficiently we manage these considerations, the better stewards we can be of these valuable resources and still meet our mission. Sound management practices are the keys to success, and lead to more efficient and effective government practices.

The private sector experience in applying management system principles to environmental issues has shown that this organized approach is both prudent and effective. Just as we feel that there should not be two sets of rules- one for government and one for the people, we also feel that there should not be barriers to applying opportunities proven in the private sector to federal government. With this in mind; the Administration advocates the implementation of environmental and health and safety management systems (EHSMS) in the federal government.

What is a Management System? A management system is a globally embraced business management practice that allows an organization to strategically address its environmental, health and safety matters. System implementation reflects accepted quality management principles based on the "Plan, Do, Check, Act," model using a standard process to identify goals, implement them, determine progress, and make improvements to ensure continual improvement.

A management system's elements include:

- **A Policy** that is endorsed by top management and states the organization's commitments
- **Planning** activities by identifying environmental impacts and health and safety risks; identifying related legal and other requirements; and developing objectives and targets to control and improve performance related to environmental, health and safety issues,
- **Implementing** activities and operations, including training and documentation, to achieve the objectives and maintain control over environmental, health and safety issues,
- **Monitoring and measuring** the status of environmental, health and safety parameters, objectives and programs, compliance status, and the health of the system itself, and providing procedures for corrective action, and
- **Management Review** of performance information by senior management for action, including enhancing the system towards the goal of continual improvement.

Why should the Federal Government use management systems? Both in concept and practice, the systems approach meshes well with the Administration's management objectives by providing the platform for meeting Administration stewardship goals as well as the management tools to measure and improve performance against those goals. Properly implemented, a management system not only improves regulatory compliance and environmental and health and safety performance, but also increases overall efficiency and accountability, reduces operational costs and potential liability, and enhances employee morale and community relations.

Background: Management systems are utilized extensively in the private sector around the world, by such companies as Dupont, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, and Pfizer. While most private sector organizations follow the International Organization for Standardization's Environmental Management System (EMS) guidelines (the ISO 14000 series), others adopt similar principles but different terminology and format. The federal sector began implementation of EMSs in the late 1990s and in response to requirements of Executive Order 13148, "Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management," over 220 federal facilities now have an operational EMS with 19 facilities formally registered to the ISO 14001 standard. Some agencies, such as DoE are already integrating environment, health, and safety into a single integrated system.

What is the role of senior management? The Administration is actively promoting and supporting the implementation of management systems. On April 1, 2002, CEQ Chairman Jim Connaughton and OMB Director Mitch Daniels wrote to all agency heads that "[t]he federal government must be a leader in using this tool of effective management" and urged each "to actively participate in your agency's efforts to make [management systems] a priority at all levels of your agency." Although initially focused on environmental systems, CEQ and OMB believe that integrating with health and safety is the logical, efficient, and prudent approach. To support and reinforce this effort, it is vital that management, policy and budget personnel are actively engaged in the process. In 2002, OMB revised its A-11 budget guidance to include EMS. The most senior levels of management need to strongly support the development of management systems in their organizations. This commitment must include both leadership and vision by openly endorsing the effort, as well as direct support through providing resources and guidance. **Only with senior management's efforts will the President's goals be met.**

More information on management systems is available at the EPA web site, www.epa.gov/ems and the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive web site, www.ofee.gov/ems/ems.htm. Additional or more specific information may be obtained by contacting Ed Pinero, Deputy Federal Environmental Executive, at ed.pinero@ofee.gov.