

FACT SHEET

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Environmental Management Systems

Overview

An Environmental Management System (EMS) is a systematic approach to managing environmental activities at a facility, or within an organization, that encompasses sound planning to meet established environmental policies and environmental protection, pollution reduction, and conservation goals. A formal EMS provides continual planning, implementing, reviewing, and improving of actions that affect the environment to achieve environmental excellence. Through perpetual evaluation and improvement, a properly implemented system can minimize waste, increase efficiency, reduce costs associated with environmental compliance, and assist in meeting established environmental goals.

There are many possible systems and approaches to achieve established environmental objectives. However, Executive Order (EO) 13148, *Greening the Government through Leadership in Environmental Management*, 22 April 2000, specifies the assessment and implementation of an EMS based on the [Code of Environmental Management Principles for Federal Agencies \(CEMP\)](#) or other appropriate framework. The EO specifies that an EMS “shall include measurable environmental goals, objectives, and targets that are reviewed and updated annually.”

EMS Framework

EMS framework is a systematic approach allowing an agency to manage all its environmental stewardship responsibilities. The CEMP developed by the Environmental Protection Agency, sets forth EMS elements, or CEMP principles, to assist federal agencies in developing and implementing an EMS framework or improving an existing management system. An agency or organization may find that many of these EMS elements already exist but are not integrated into a formal management system.

CEMP Principles

- ***Management Commitment:*** The agency makes a management commitment to improve environmental performance by establishing policies emphasizing pollution prevention and the need to ensure compliance with environmental requirements.
- ***Compliance Assurance & Pollution Prevention:*** The agency implements programs that aggressively identify and address potential compliance problem areas and utilize pollution prevention approaches to correct deficiencies and improve environmental performance.
- ***Enabling Systems:*** The agency develops and implements the necessary measures to enable personnel to perform functions consistent with regulatory requirements, agency environmental policies, and its overall mission.
- ***Performance & Accountability:*** The agency develops measures to address employee environmental performance, and ensure full accountability of environmental functions.
- ***Measurement & Improvement:*** The agency develops and implements a program to assess progress toward meeting its environmental goals and uses the results to improve environmental performance.

Although the Department of Defense has endorsed the CEMP agency-wide, an alternative EMS, ISO 14001 is being evaluated.

ISO 14001

The [International Organization for Standards \(ISO\) 14001, EMS - Specification with Guidance for Use](#), part of the ISO 14000 series on environmental management, provides organizations with a similar approach to developing and implementing an environmental management system that identifies and manages all environmental impacts of their activities and services. Organizations



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subscribing to ISO 14001, must commit to establishing and maintaining a management system that follows the elements outlined in the standard.

ISO 14001 EMS Elements

- ↳ Policy Statement
- ↳ Planning
- ↳ Implementation & Operation
- ↳ Checking & Corrective Action
- ↳ Management Review

The CEMP and ISO standard may have different guideline headings, but both assist in developing a framework for implementing an EMS that manages, assesses, and improves not only compliance with environmental regulations, but pollution prevention and conservation measures. Essentially, an EMS is a management tool that supports all environmental programs by identifying deficiencies and providing for continuous improvement progressing toward outstanding overall environmental performance.

The AF Program

To achieve and maintain environmental quality, the Air Force (AF) established the Environmental Protection Committee, which develops policies to maintain regulatory compliance; and specified installations to identify environmental impacts and initiate measures to reduce those impacts. To determine how the program functioned the AF instituted an annual audit - the [Environmental Compliance Assessment and Management Program](#).

Within the past several years, the AF adopted a four-pillar environmental quality process to expand their environmental

Four Pillars

- Clean-Up
- Compliance
- Conservation
- Pollution Prevention

program, which increased the program's performance. To further the program, the AF is presently evaluating a formal environmental management system as outlined by ISO 14001 and is participating in several pilot studies. Initial comparisons between the existing AF environmental program and an EMS based on ISO standards indicate that a majority of EMS elements or principles already exist within the AF.

For Additional Information

Contact Mr. Scott Newquist, Environmental Quality Directorate, Headquarters Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence, DSN 240-3517; or PRO-ACT at DSN 240-4240.

Web Sites

- ☞ *Environmental Management Systems*, DENIX, <http://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/DOD/Library/EMS/ems.html>.
- ☞ *Environmental Management*, EPA, <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/>
- ☞ *Environmental Management Systems*, EPA, <http://www.epa.gov/ems>.

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