

4.5.3 RECORDS

THE PURPOSE OF EMS RECORDS

Records help to keep track of what has happened that is relevant to the EMS, and when it happened. Records:

- Contain a history of performance in the EMS; activities, information, changes, data for operating variables and wastes, and dates
- Contain proof of progress towards objectives and targets
- Help to monitor trends, for example in environmental emergencies, non-conformances, contaminant levels
- Provide evidence that activities have taken place
- Help when assessing the effectiveness of the EMS.

ISO 14001 4.5.3 RECORDS says:

The organization shall establish and maintain procedures for the identification, maintenance, and disposition of environmental records. These records shall include training records and the results of audits and reviews.

Environmental records shall be legible, identifiably and traceable to the activity, product or service involved. Environmental records shall be stored and maintained in such a way that they are readily retrievable, and protected against damage, deterioration, or loss. Their retention times shall be established and recorded.

Records shall be maintained as appropriate to the organization, to demonstrate conformance to the requirements of this International Standard.

WHICH RECORDS TO KEEP

According to ISO 14001, records must be kept of:

- Environmental training undertaken by each person in the organization
- The results of environmental audits for review by top management
- Management reviews.

In addition, records should be kept of all factors which help to demonstrate that the EMS conforms with ISO 14001. These include:

- Matrix of environmental aspects and impacts
- List of significant environmental aspects and impacts, and the method used to determine significance
- Legal registry, environmental permits, and links to significant environmental aspects
- Results of monitoring and measurement of environmental performance indicators
- Reports on environmental management programs, tracking progress towards achievement of objectives and targets
- Environmental training – who has been trained, in what, and to what level of competence
- The organization's decision on the communication of significant environmental aspects to external interested parties
- Communications with (i.e., to and from) external interested parties

- Histories of changes to documented procedures
- Contractor and supplier agreements and contracts, with reference to environmental clauses
- Emergency response incidents, drills, and incident investigations
- Environmental monitoring, sampling, analysis results, and instrument calibrations
- Routine inspections and preventive maintenance associated with the EMS
- Non-conformances, root cause analyses, and corrective and preventive actions
- Follow-up on the effectiveness of corrective and preventive actions
- Legal compliance and environmental reports to government

- Results of environmental audits for the information of all employees
- Agenda and minutes of management review meetings.

As with other EMS documentation, records must be legible, orderly, stored securely yet readily available, complete, dated, traceable to their origins, and kept for defined lengths of time.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Records provide evidence that the EMS conforms with ISO 14001 requirements and organizational policies and procedures.
- Records are a history of information relating to the EMS.
- Records must be kept systematically so they add value to the EMS.