



Announcer

It's time for the *IHSA Safety Podcast*.

Ken Rayner:

Welcome to the IHSA Safety podcast. I'm your host, Ken Rayner. On this episode of the podcast, we're discussing management systems, in particular, those intended to help mitigate and control occupational health and safety risks in the workplace. And today we're going to focus on two of the occupational health and safety management systems that have been recognized by the chief prevention officer of Ontario's, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development. And those two are COR® 2020 and ISO 45001:2018. So let's be very clear. Both systems can help employers create, maintain, and improve workplace health and safety. However, it is important to understand which system may be better suited to help you and your company identify hazards, recognize and identify suitable controls, and continually evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your system. So to help us better understand the similarities and the differences of both systems, very pleased to welcome to the *IHSA Safety Podcast* two certified occupational health and safety management system auditors for both COR® 2020 and ISO 45001. We have Cameron Mitchell and Carson Powell from AudEng International. Welcome, Carson.

Carson Powell:

Thank you, Ken. We appreciate the opportunity and looking forward to discussing this interesting topic with you. Thank you.

Ken Rayner:

Great. And great to have you here as well, Cam.

Cameron Mitchell:

Right on. Yeah, thanks. Looking forward to it.

Ken Rayner:

Great. So AudEng International is a Canadian company who specializes in consultation and audit services for occupational health and safety management systems. So let's start with a why question and we're going to ask two of the experts here. So why would an organization consider implementing an occupational health and safety management system? And what value can a fully functioning system provide to the workers that the system is intended to protect? So Cam, why don't we start with you here?

Cameron Mitchell:

Well, I kind of think about the iceberg concept here. What's above water and what's below? So first of all, the obvious one that you'd like to think a strong health and safety management system would bring to the table is less injuries in the workplace. And as a result of that, you're going to see lowered WSIB [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board] rates. In terms of what's below the water, you're going to see higher worker morale, increased organizational culture and job satisfaction, lower worker turnover, increased company reputation, and in many cases increased productivity due to having those employees who might've been off on injury.

Ken Rayner:

Wow, that's pretty significant. Carson, do you have anything to add there?

Carson Powell:

No, I think Cam nailed it. Really, you've got to focus on the organization and being compliant with legislation, having a functional health and safety management system aids both the employee and the employer. So too often people think, oh, they're just doing this for the benefit of the company, but what's good for the goose is good for the gander. So it's important to have a functional health and safety management system.

Ken Rayner:

Right on. And I love the iceberg analogy because that's the, I guess, yes, the obvious piece is the compliance with legislation and that's great, but then there's a whole host of benefits when you do comply with legislation as to what you get from that. And certainly I think a big part of that is the workers and the appreciation that they demonstrate in terms of appreciating that management has taken this effort and they're implementing a system that's intended to keep everyone safe and keep everyone healthy. Right. Okay. So as I mentioned earlier as we were doing the introduction, there are two occupational health and safety standards that we're going to talk about today that are recognized by the ministry in their supporting Ontario's safe employers program. And those two are COR® 2020 and ISO 45001:2018.

IHSA is the regulatory body for COR® in Ontario, as you both know, but we also provide equivalency to those companies that have become certified to ISO 45001:2018, have certified their entire scope of operations, and have those operations in Ontario. So we, IHSA sees the two as equal as long as everybody is doing everything they need to do to comply with the ISO standard and making sure it's an accredited certificate. So we recognize both. Both systems can significantly assist an employer address and control hazards in a safe and healthy manner. But there's differences between the two. Right?

It's kind of like if you're going to buy a computer, you can either buy, let's say a MacBook or you could buy an HP laptop and both of them you'll be able to do email and browse the internet and do basic functions. But a MacBook typically lends itself to more creativity and designing and things of that nature. And you've got more business systems maybe on an HP. So they start to differ a little bit depending on the needs of the user. Right? And we sort of see ISO and COR® in that same way. So let's

start with ISO 45001:2018 first Carson. What are some of the reasons that an employer might elect to implement ISO 45001:2018 instead of COR® 2020?

Carson Powell:

So there's a few advantages to ISO 45001:2018. One would be that it's an internationally recognized standard. COR® is really regional to the provinces within Canada. Most every province has a COR® program, but when you get outside of Canada and into the US and other parts of the world, COR® holds no value. And with ISO 45001:2018, you can go into the international community and it can be recognized as a functional occupational health and safety management system. So that'd be one. One thing is the flexibility. So the ISO 45001:2018 standard, it's quite broad, very ambiguous. Obviously there's requirements within that standard, but how you kind of achieve conformity to that standard is up to you as an organization. So I often say they give you enough rope to hang yourself, right? They're not prescribing what to do, how to do it, they're just saying this is the standard. You show us how you're going to meet the standard. So that would be another way.

It's not industry specific, it's transferable from any industry, whereas COR®, it's kind of prescribed to the construction industry or infrastructure. That would be one thing that may be a benefit. It's conducive to companies of all sizes, from smaller organizations up to multinational organizations. Reason being is again, it's the standard and how you are going to meet that standard as your organization. You also get to determine the scope of your ISO 45001:2018 management system. So you pick which portions of your organizations that you want to include. That can be a benefit, especially for those large organizations that dabble into multi industries. That can be effective. You also determine the boundaries. That kind of leads into that as well. How far or how broad your management system wants to be.

You also can determine your audit program. So that would be how you want to audit your own internal occupational health and safety management system. If you want to focus on a certain section, or area, or region within your organization, it offers that latitude and that flexibility. And then one thing that often people do like is there's no actual score, there's no percentage. It's based on nonconformities, major, minor, and observations. So that's one thing that organizations do appreciate is we're not focusing on the score, we're focused on conformity. So I think those are a few of the options that people may find desirable in ISO 45001:2018.

Ken Rayner:

Yeah. So let's go back and just maybe unpack a couple of them if we could. So what I think I heard you say was, so there's flexibility and with flexibility sometimes that also comes a need for ability to make decisions and determine what's right for your organization. Right? So what the flexibility and freedom comes then a need to be able to determine for yourself in some cases what's required. Right?

So would that be fair to say that if an organization, in your expert opinion, Carson, with all the audits you've done an organization that's going to elect ISO 45001, would they need to have more resources on staff that have a very definitive, clear understanding of management systems and how to read standards and how to apply them? Being that this is a standard that is applicable in Korea, Columbia, the United States, Iceland, Canada, it is applicable all over the world. Right. So is that one of the things that if someone was looking to implement this and taking your advice, the resources they have on staff would be some sort of bearing in terms of whether or not this is the right one for them?

Carson Powell:

One hundred per cent, yeah. You nailed it again. So you need to have top management that health and safety is paramount. And you also have to have somebody or a group of people within the organization, or a solid consultant, that understands the requirements of ISO 45001:2018. If you don't have a high-level understanding of occupational health and safety and you don't have an expert-level grasp of the standard, trying to abide or be conforming to a standard that you don't understand, it can be looking at something in a different language. And I've done audits where the organizations, they don't have a handle on it and they really struggle because exactly what you said, it takes additional resources. It really takes a high level understanding both from an occupational health and safety standpoint to a management system standpoint, and then finally to understanding the actual standard itself and how you can apply it.

Ken Rayner:

And could we add maybe one more to some of the lists that you've added, which is if a company already has ISO 9000 for a quality management system and ISO 45, ISO sorry, 14000 for the environmental system, that would make more sense to implement ISO 45001, right? Because they've already got the foundation of those ISO standards in place and then putting COR in probably wouldn't fit as nicely as ISO 45000. Would that be another factor that if somebody again had those two standards, probably looking at ISO 45000 over COR®?

Carson Powell:

Yes, for sure. They really kind of feed into each other. The framework and the foundation of those standards, 9000 and 14001 are very similar to ISO 45001:2018. It also allows the opportunity to have what's called an integrated system where you get all three. So it kind of plays right into that. And there are options within the provinces, including Ontario, that if you achieve ISO 45001:2018, there is that reciprocity available if it meets the requirements in terms of a full management system audit so yeah.

Ken Rayner:

Right. Right. Good. Okay. So some really good information. So if you're looking internationally, if you're a large organization, if you're just an organization with lots of understanding of occupational health and safety as well as management standards, if you've already got ISO 9000 or 14000 in play, those might be some reasons that you would move towards ISO 45001 and make use of that flexibility. Right? So thank you very much, Carson. Cam, let's move over to you. All right, so we've talked about ISO 45001. How about COR®? What are some reasons an Ontario employer in particular would elect to implement COR® 2020 over ISO 45001?

Cameron Mitchell:

Yeah, so I think the first thing I would talk about is that it's focused locally. You talk about an Ontario employer. The idea here is a lot of the aspects of COR® 2020 are focused on a prescriptive aspect that covers legislative requirements, it's industry specific and it's heavily structured to assist firms in a formal process. So if you don't have that subject matter expertise, those resources on board, the process is

really going to help hold your hand, ensure that you're meeting the key requirements of that local legislative requirement.

The next part I think about is COR® is definitely better recognized across Canada. Carson definitely touched on a point where if you're an international firm, COR® is not really even known outside of Canada, but in terms of within Canada, especially across the western provinces and now very much so in Ontario, it is the known standard for sure. The other part I really like is the prescriptive nature. So if you don't have heavy resources, perhaps if you're a smaller firm, if you are newer to a health and safety management system, COR® is going to be much more realistic to help you get to that process outcome, which is a certification.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. And just maybe comment on something if we can that maybe Carson said in regards to, so ISO 45001 has been designed as a standard that's applicable across all of the industries that we serve, right? We know that COR started in construction. With COR® 2020 today, do you see it being more applicable to other industries rather than just construction?

Cameron Mitchell:

Yeah, definitely. And in fact, we've audited other industries. I think one of the things that the 2020 tool has done is become a little bit more agnostic in nature so that if you're a manufacturing firm, if you're a utilities firm, somebody who's not specifically in construction, it's still applicable to you for sure.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. Carson, we're going to come back to you here. Now we've used the word accreditation a couple times or accredit. How does an accredited ISO audit differ from one that is unaccredited Carson, particularly through the eyes of an auditor?

Carson Powell:

Okay. Sounds good. So I mean there's two different aspects. With the unaccredited, basically anyone can do it. There's no parameters, there's no overarching governing body that's going to verify that processes were followed. Basically, as mentioned, anyone can do it. So I could do an unaccredited audit if I track down an IHSA audit tool, I could do an ISO unaccredited audit if I track down the ISO 45001:2018 standard. Really it's just somebody comes in, does an assessment or evaluation of your management system and then provides you with a report with no backing or no verification in the backend. So with an accredited audit, that is delivered by somebody who is governed by an overarching accreditation body. So with ISO, you have certifying body, and then if they are a certifying body, that means that they've gone through the accreditation body from what's called an AB or an accreditation body.

Now, there's only a few accreditation bodies in North America, so there's the Safety Council of Canada, that's one. And one of the big ones that is utilized in North America is ANAB. So anyone who's accredited has to go through an accreditation process. So that would mean the CB gets audited, their auditors get audited, they've been deemed competent by both the certifying body and the accreditation body. So there's lots of checks and balances. And if I were to give an analogy, it would be almost exactly

the same as a company going through COR® would be the accreditation or the certifying body has to get accredited in order to do those accredited audits.

So there's many checks and balances. It's very important, especially in the provinces in Canada, that you verify that the auditor and the certifying body are accredited. And you can do that by going to the accreditation bodies such as ANAB and verifying that that organization that is conducting the audit is in fact accredited or certified to do that audit. And particular to the management system, you can be accredited to ISO 45, sorry, ISO 9001, but you're not able to do ISO 45001. So each management system that you go through, you have to get accredited. So it's a lengthy process as I'm sure IHSA as being an accredited body or certified body, you know the challenges that go into being that.

Ken Rayner:

Right. So thanks very much for that. So it certainly sounds, the whole purpose of standards, whether we're talking about a national standard in Canada or an international standard like ISO is consistency. Right. And if I'm not mistaken, the way that the ISO world set up the means for consistency is through in a governance model where they have accreditation bodies such as the Standards Council of Canada, who we recently had on for a podcast to talk about this. And then so you've got the accreditation bodies, and then underneath them you have the certification bodies, and then underneath the certification bodies you have the companies that are seeking certifications. So it's a check and balance each step along the way. And if you take out one of those building blocks, then the consistency potentially has the chance of crumbling, right? So that's a big piece. So in terms of wanting to ensure consistency, wanting to ensure that your standard is recognized in the same as everyone else's standard, you want to make sure it's accredited. Is that fair?

Carson Powell:

Yeah, absolutely. And the auditors are accredited too. The nice thing about COR® auditors in the province of Ontario is they've been vetted, they've gone through all the checks and balances and verifications by the IHSA. You're looking specifically at the Ontario regs, whereas an ISO auditor of 45001, one of the components is to understand legal requirements. But because you're a generalist, for lack of a better term, you know where to find the legislation, but you may not be apt at applying it. So again, going back to that's probably another benefit with the COR® 2020 through the IHSA in Ontario.

Ken Rayner:

Okay, so for COR® 2020 and for those ISO 45001 accredited audits, then we have a very good feeling that all of those auditors that are coming in are certified and accredited and recognized in those industries that they're auditing, right? They've been recognized as having the expertise needed to go in and understand the hazards and understand what controls need to be put in place. And so when they deem that to be a certified system, that should be sufficient, right?

Carson Powell:

Absolutely. Yep.

Ken Rayner:

Okay. All right. Cam back over to you. So let's maybe give some guidance to those firms out there that are just in the beginning stages of implementing an occupational health and safety management system. What are some guidance and tips that you could provide to an employer that's just starting out and whether they're looking at ISO or COR®, but just starting to implement a system, what are some things that they could do that would quicken the process and allow them to build some momentum?

Cameron Mitchell:

Well, first of all, I look at what is the impetus for implementation of a management system? Is the employer doing it altruistically? Then some of those things we can take our time with. If it's because potentially they're looking to be able to get onto a bid list or be able to maintain a client's work activities, my first thing would be Rome wasn't built in a day. Recognize it takes time to implement a strong management system. I think a lot of companies get a little flustered worrying if it's going to impact the bottom line and hope that they can get this going in two or three months and it's just not the case. You need to take time, you need to recognize that it will take a while for this to go. And I think just be mindful, it's going to take time to implement a strong system.

The next thing I think about is using the resources that are available. There's stuff like training materials out there. There's various documents that are available. There's the IHSA website. There's third party training that you can take such as an OHS diploma or certificate degree. There's the CSSE, there's the CCOHS. There's a number of different resources that are out there that can help you build a strong management system. The next thing I would think of is don't reinvent the wheel. There's a strong guideline that exists within Ontario to support your progress. Achieving either ISO or COR®, ensuring that you follow those guidelines to the letter is going to result in a strong management system. And I've seen it time and time again, the companies that follow it closest generally end up with the best success. The next thing I would think about is asking for help, whether it's the IHSA, whether it's an independent consultant, industry peers, somebody else has gotten through it successfully, somebody's got the answer. Don't struggle in vain. Sometimes it's good to “take your licking” and just call somebody up and phone a friend.

The other thing I think about is dedication and commitment. Don't take your foot off the gas. We need relentless adoption from the top down. Management has to be committed, management has to care. And if you take your foot off the gas for any second, it's just not going to work.

Ken Rayner:

Right on. Thank you very much. Those are great. If I can go back on two of them. So one Cam, I love the fact that you just put that out there to say, hey, don't get upset if this isn't done in six months or a year because it's really not intended to be. Right. If you're building something in six months, you're probably rushing it. And I would think there's going to be some things that go wrong or shortcuts you're going to take that you shouldn't. Right. And when you take a look at a program such as WSIB's Health and Safety Excellence program, they don't allow companies just in for a year. If I'm not mistaken, I think they let them in for six or seven years to go ahead and build that occupational health and safety management system over time, right? So it can be done in stages and it's not, as you said, Rome being built in one day.

So love that. That's a great one. And the second one, which years ago we pulled a bunch of newly certified, COR® certified companies and the number one thing they said when we asked them what would they do differently, they said they'd ask for help more. So I really appreciate you saying that as well because that completely rings true with what we've heard as well is that, hey, there's a lot of help out there. Pick up the phone, call IHSA, send an email in to cor@ihsa.ca, and ask your question. Right. We want to see the companies, we're not going to do it for you, but we'll certainly point you in the direction of the information you need and guide you to that answer. So fantastic. Thanks very much. Those are great, great suggestions, Cam. Carson, how about we finish up with you?

Carson Powell:

Sure. I just had another point if you wanted to,

Ken Rayner:

Okay. Yeah, sure. Sorry, go ahead.

Carson Powell:

Really ensure that you collaborate with your workers. So often we put it on the safety people and or the management. And one of the requirements in ISO specifically is collaboration and participation of non-managerial workers. And COR® has that requirement as well. And I can't stress it enough, how much more buy-in you're going to get if you involve the people, right, the people within the organization from all aspects. So don't hold things in, share it, collaborate, and I think that's going to set you up for success.

Ken Rayner:

And don't you find too Carson, there's an appreciation from the workers when you ask them for their suggestions because they're the ones doing the work. And so if you're going to look to alter the process or change it, getting some buy-in for them so that when they see an altered process, they can actually see themselves in those suggestions to say, Hey, I contributed to that and so now I'm going to follow it because I was part of the process of improvement.

Carson Powell:

One hundred per cent. And that's one of the fastest way to lose the workers and the employees is you ask for input and you don't acknowledge their input or you don't apply the input. You can't obviously take every piece of information or feedback from everyone, but know that whatever they do provide it is valued and it is acknowledged and it is reviewed. So I think that's really important too.

Ken Rayner:

Terrific. Thank you. Great add. Thank you. I'm glad you added that to the questions. So let's jump back to that last one, because this one here I was going to ask is a little bit different looking. The first one, we just talked about new companies. Now let's talk about companies that are maybe certified to COR® or ISO 45001 for several years. Now COR®, just COR® being around longer than ISO 45001. Let's stick with

COR® in this one, but what guidance and tips would you provide for a company that's had, let's say they're on their third or fourth cycle of COR that would help them continue and improve and evolve their system?

Carson Powell:

Yeah, Cam and I sat and talked about this before we went on air here, and we both have little different analogies. Mine would be you put all that effort, you push the boulder up the hill, you get to the top of the hill, you put your hands up and then it goes back down. So stay diligent, Cam said, keep your foot on the gas. It's so important. Us as auditors, we've seen it many, many times, is you put all the resources, time, effort into getting certified and then you just kind of put it by the wayside, I'll get to it next year. We're certified for three years, we don't have to worry about it. And that's evident that you aren't doing or following the management system or implementing it for the correct reasons. So I think just stay with it. In my mind, as a safety professional, it's the most difficult part, is to maintain an occupational health and safety management system and to internally keep that integrity that you're going to follow your own system regardless of who is watching.

Ken Rayner:

Right. Great analogy. Cam, so you've got a different analogy. Cam, which one's yours?

Cameron Mitchell:

I call it COR® blinders. A lot of companies when they're going for COR, they've got those blinders on. They're really trying their best to do everything they can to push that certification across the line. And as soon as they get there, I think a lot of things happen, but in many cases the resources go away. Hey, we did it. We achieved COR®. Maybe they dropped their consultants. I've seen cases where they drop their safety person altogether, they don't allocate as much budget the next year. There is a number of things that can occur, and when that happens, COR®'s not like riding a bike. If you drop it for any minute, it's really difficult to get back on and get back at it. So just to build on Carson's point is don't drop the resource, don't let up. In fact, in many cases I'd say find new ways to grow and evolve to keep the interest high.

Ken Rayner:

I love it. So you've put in all that work, and I guess what I'm hearing from both of you is sometimes the misnomer out there is certification is the end game when really certification is just the start of the journey. Right. That's where now you can say, okay, now we're in the game. We've become certified. Now let's continue to improve the system, right, as opposed to we got certified, now we can take our foot off the gas and don't have to worry about anything anymore.

Carson Powell:

So the old...

Ken Rayner:

Right.

Carson Powell:

...The old adage, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". Definitely don't follow that. You always want to try and evolve.

Ken Rayner:

All right. So just keep fixing, keep fixing, keep fixing, keep fixing, keep fixing.

Carson Powell:

Keep evolving, right? Just keep going. Yeah, because things change. Right.

Ken Rayner:

Right on. Continual improvement.

Carson Powell:

Yeah, legislation change, personnel changes, equipment changes, technology changes. Everything changes, right? So it's important that your management system evolves as well.

Ken Rayner:

Excellent, excellent. Carson Powell, Cam Mitchell from AudEng International, thank you so much. We really appreciate the perspective of both of you. I don't think there's very many auditors in Canada that are certified to be able to audit to both ISO 45001 for accredited audits as well as COR® 2020. So we really appreciate you, the both of you taking the time and sharing your insights and your knowledge with IHSA and its listeners. So thank you very much, Carson and Cam.

Carson Powell:

Thanks Ken, it was a pleasure.

Cameron Mitchell:

Yeah, thanks very much Ken.

Ken Rayner:

And thank you to the listeners for listening to the *IHSA Safety Podcast*. Be sure to subscribe and like us on your podcast channel and visit us at ihsa.ca for a wealth of health and safety resources and information.

Announcer

The *IHSA Safety Podcast*. For more episodes, tips and all things safety, go to ihsasafetypodcast.ca. Thanks for listening.

Start each workday by reinforcing awareness and control of hazards in your workplace with a five-minute safety talk. IHSA's free *Safety Talks Manual* covers over 150 topics, such as personal protective equipment and traffic control, with more topics added all the time. Visit ihsa.ca to download your free *IHSA Safety Talks Manual* today.