

ISO 14001:2026

SUMMARY OF CHANGES



What to expect

ISO 14001:2026 brings key updates to the environmental management systems (EMS) standard. It reflects growing global priorities such as climate resilience, biodiversity and sustainable resource use, while clarifying and strengthening existing requirements.

There are revisions across many clauses to enhance clarity, traceability and accountability. The new version introduces updated terminology, refined content and a stronger focus on environmental performance, while retaining the core Annex SL structure.

Clause 4 – Context of the organisation

- Environmental conditions (e.g. climate change, pollution, biodiversity) must now be explicitly considered
- EMS scope must reflect a lifecycle approach
- Key documents must be “available as documented information”

Your action: update context analysis, stakeholder maps and scope definition.

Clause 5 – Leadership and commitment

- Updated terminology: “meet compliance obligations” replaces “fulfil”
- Greater emphasis on conserving natural resources and ecosystem protection

Your action: revise your environmental policy and ensure executive engagement.

Clause 6 – Planning

- Clause 6.3 (New): requires a structured approach to EMS-related change management
- Emergency situations are now separated from abnormal operations
- Planning is split into:
 - 6.1.4: identify risks and opportunities
 - 6.1.5: plan actions accordingly

Your action: refresh risk registers, aspect-impact evaluations and planning documentation.

Disclaimer

The information presented is based on the latest available requirements of ISO 14001:2026. While SGS strives to ensure the accuracy and relevance of this content, organizations are strongly encouraged to obtain the official standard and consult with an SGS expert for specific transition guidance.

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Clause 7 – Support

- Terminology now standardised: all EMS records must be “available as documented information”
- Communication must empower employees to contribute to continual improvement

Your action: review communication and training processes.

Clause 8 – Operations

- “Outsourced processes” now referred to as “externally provided processes, products or services”
- Operational control must extend to suppliers and partners
- Emergency preparedness must align with risk planning (Clause 6.1.2)

Your action: strengthen supplier management and emergency planning.

Clause 9 – Performance evaluation

- Explicit requirement to evaluate environmental performance and EMS effectiveness
- Internal audits must define objectives, in addition to scope and criteria
- Management reviews are restructured into three sub-clauses: inputs, process and results

Your action: update internal audit and management review processes.

Clause 10 – Improvement

- Clause 10.1 removed – its content is now integrated into 10.2 and 10.3
- More structured approach to nonconformity and corrective action
- Clear linkage between Clause 9 findings and continual improvement

Your action: strengthen root cause analysis and improvement tracking.