

ISO 45003:2021

Frequently Asked Questions: Psychological Health and Safety at Work

General Overview

Q1: What is ISO 45003?

ISO 45003 is the first international standard providing practical guidance on managing psychological health and safety in the workplace. It is a child standard to ISO 45001 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems) and focuses specifically on psychosocial risks.

Q2: Why was this standard developed?

Work-related stress, burnout, and mental health issues have become leading causes of long-term absence and reduced productivity. ISO 45003 was created to help organizations build resilient cultures by addressing the root causes of stress rather than just treating the symptoms.

Implementation & Scope

Q3: What are "Psychosocial Risks"?

These are risks related to how work is organized, social factors at work, and the work environment itself. Examples include excessive workload, lack of control over work, poor leadership, workplace bullying, and lack of social support.

Q4: Is ISO 45003 a requirement for ISO 45001?

No. ISO 45003 is a "guidance" standard, not a requirement standard. However, ISO 45001 already requires organizations to manage mental health; ISO 45003 simply provides the detailed "how-to" for meeting those existing obligations.

Q5: Can an organization be "Certified" to ISO 45003?

Because it is a guidance standard (ending in '3'), you cannot be formally "certified" to ISO 45003 in the same way you are to ISO 45001 or ISO 9001. Instead, organizations are audited against ISO 45001 using the principles of ISO 45003 as a benchmark for excellence in mental health management.

Benefits & Impact

Q6: What are the benefits of adopting ISO 45003?

Adopting the standard can lead to:

- Reduced turnover and absenteeism.
- Increased employee engagement and morale.
- Improved legal compliance regarding "duty of care."
- Enhanced brand reputation as an "employer of choice."

Q7: Who is responsible for implementing it?

Success requires a multidisciplinary approach involving Top Management, Human Resources (HR), Health and Safety (H&S) officers, and most importantly, the active participation of employees.

Pro-Tip: ISO 45003 emphasizes that psychological health and safety is not just about "wellness programs" like yoga or fruit baskets; it is about changing the structural way work is performed to prevent harm.

