

First Steps When Implementing a Safety and Occupational Health Management System at Your Organization

Your organization chose a safety and occupational health management system (SOHMS) model, now what? The next step is to develop an implementation plan! At first glance, the SOHMS criteria may seem overwhelming; however, it does not need to be. When you have a good plan in place, implementing SOHMS criteria is much easier to manage, especially for larger organizations. Follow the information in this one pager to break down the implementation process and tackle it one step at a time!

PRIORITIZE WORKSITE IMPLEMENTATION

Decide how to implement the SOHMS criteria. *Do you want to start with a particular group or work activity? Do you want to roll out the criteria across the entire organization at once? Does this approach support the scope of our SOHMS?* Determine your approach. Approaching implementation in small chunks gives you an opportunity to trial different strategies and identify obstacles before introducing concepts organization-wide. This is just one strategy – another strategy may work better at your organization. Consider organizational size and layout, number of employees, available resources, and the status of your current safety and health (S&H) program, as you develop your plan.

COMMUNICATE AND DISPLAY TOP MANAGEMENT “BUY-IN”

Top leaders must communicate and demonstrate commitment to the SOHMS; they can do this during meetings, townhalls, or organization-wide events. Ask the highest-ranking official at your organization to reinforce their commitment by writing and signing an S&H commitment statement and/or policy statement. Post commitment statements throughout your work areas so it is readily accessible to employees. These statements act as reminders of management’s commitment to the SOHMS.



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DEFINE ORGANIZATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A successful SOHMS involves creating, developing, and achieving S&H goals and objectives. Create [SMART goals and objectives](#) based on actions you want your organization to accomplish. Think back to when you chose your SOHMS model – *what benefits did you anticipate achieving?* Make sure your goals are meaningful and apply to your workplace! Continually evaluate your progress towards meeting your goals. Don’t be afraid to modify a goal or objective, if necessary!

DEVELOP A SOHMS COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION PLAN

Create a SOHMS communication and promotion plan to keep your workforce informed and up to date. Identify the target audience for each plan, determine your message, and establish the appropriate distribution channels (e.g., safety topic talks, bulletin board posts, emails). Information you may promote includes the decision to pursue a SOHMS, implementation progress, status if organizational goals, and how employees can get involved.

CHOOSE A SOHMS CHAMPION

A SOHMS Champion leads SOHMS tasks and actively promotes S&H at the organization. Select an individual that communicates and works with others, understands the SOHMS model, and knows the organization's S&H goals, objectives, and priorities. Assign your Champion the authority to make changes that impact the SOHMS. Give them enough time to lead through example, get out in workforce, and be involved – don't plan to keep them behind a desk all the time!



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DEVELOP A SOHMS COMMITTEE AND GAIN EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Develop a SOHMS committee to discuss SOHMS implementation progress. Ensure the committee is comprised of employees representing different parts of your organization, leadership and supervisors, and possibly even contractors. A cross-functional team promotes communication and gives employees a feeling of ownership and involvement. Prepare agendas, hold periodic meetings, document meeting minutes, and act on committee meeting resolutions.

CONDUCT A GAP ANALYSIS

Reach out to the Department of Defense (DoD) SMCX and request an on-site gap analysis of your organization's processes and procedures against your SOHMS model. An SMCX on-site assessment team conducts document reviews, employee, leadership, and stakeholder interviews, and site walkthroughs to evaluate S&H processes and verify employee knowledge. You then receive an action plan with recommendations, feedback, and best practices that you can use to implement or improve processes, policies, or procedures and meet the SOHMS criteria.

CREATE AN IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Treat SOHMS implementation like a project and set a timeline. Refer to gap analysis findings and determine actions your organization needs to undertake on your way to a fully effective SOHMS. Assign deadlines and responsible persons to each action. Plan time for follow up evaluations and adjustments after initially completing an action item. Remember, it's okay to revise timelines as your organization sees fit.

TAKE ACTION

Your plan is in place, you assigned responsible persons, and now it's time to get started. Take your time, verify your actions meet SOHMS criteria, and make changes as you go – you are on your way to achieve full SOHMS implementation!

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at:
<https://www.smcx.org/>.

For more information on making a case for and choosing a SOHMS, see the SMCX one pagers:

"The Case for a SOHMS"

"First Steps When Choosing a SOHMS"

