

Why You Should Base Your OHS Program on a Voluntary Standard



Companies that are committed to workplace safety typically have OHS programs. In fact, the OHS laws may require such programs. You can develop an OHS program on your own or you can base it on a voluntary standard from an organization such as the CSA.

We wondered how many OHS/EHS programs are actually based on the various voluntary standards that are available so we asked that question in a recent poll. Results:

- 65% said their program wasn't based on any voluntary standard
- CSA Z1000, Occupational Health and Safety Management was the basis for 23% of the OHS programs
- OHSAS 18001 from the British Standards Institution was the basis for 10%
- 3% used ISO 14001, Environmental Management
- And no one used ILO-OSH 2001, Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems.

It makes sense that the most commonly used standard was CSA Z1000 because it was specifically designed for Canadian workplaces. (Learn more about [this standard](#) and [the others](#) mentioned in the poll from OHS consultant Wayne Pardy.)

In addition, the CSA standard was designed to work with other

OHS standards from the CSA, such as:

- CSA Z1001 on OHS Training (watch the [recording of this webinar](#) by Dylan Short to learn about this standard)
- CSA Z1002 OHS ' Hazard Identification and Elimination and Risk Assessment and Control (this [recorded webinar](#) will tell you more and you can use this [risk assessment questionnaire](#) based on the standard)
- CSA Z1003 Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (you can [read about this standard](#) or watch the [recording of a webinar](#) by Martin Short on it).

But if you're looking for a more international standard, one is on its way.

The [International Organization for Standardization](#), the world's largest global developer of voluntary international standards, recently announced long-awaited approval for the creation of a committee that'll develop an international standard for occupational health and safety management systems ('OHSMS').

The ISO says the OHSMS standard will help improve worker safety and prevent and reduce work-related injuries, diseases and deaths around the world by creating an international framework for OHS best practices.

Why should you consider taking steps to ensure your OHS program complies with any voluntary standard? Because these standards have more stringent requirements and go beyond mere compliance with OHS laws. So having a certified OHS program will help you prove due diligence and effectively protect your workers.