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# The New International Guidance Standard ISO 45006

Occupational health and safety  
management — preventing and  
managing infectious diseases –  
General guidelines for  
organizations

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## Background

- ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies).
- The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees (ISO TC 283/WG5).
- Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee.
- International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work.



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## ISO 45006- Much learned... not to be forgotten

- Infectious diseases are increasingly recognized as major challenges to health, safety and well-being.
- There is a broad range of infectious diseases with potential impacts on health, safety and well-being, which can vary from very mild to very serious depending on the nature of the infectious disease.

### Infectious

Non-contagious – Lyme, rabies, salmonella, legionella

Contagious – COVID-19, Cold, Flu, HIV, Hepatitis,





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## ISO 45006 – Guidance Standard

Decisions and activities relating to the prevention and management of infectious diseases that affect:

- workers within the organization,
- other people who visit a workplace,
- come into contact with workers, or
- can be affected by the organization's activities.

ISO 45006 is a document that describes a systematic way of considering how to manage infectious disease in the workplace.



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## ISO 45006

Provides guidelines for organizations on how to prevent or control exposure to infectious agents at the workplace and manage the risks associated with infectious diseases that:

- present a risk of severe ill health or death and can impact the health, safety and wellbeing of workers and other relevant interested parties;
- present a lower risk to health yet have a significant impact on the organization, its workers and other relevant interested parties.

This document is applicable to organizations of all sizes and sectors.

Recognizing many smaller organizations do not have dedicated departments.



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## ISO 45006: *Not* a OHSMS but compatible

Organizations using ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety management systems can use this document to improve OH&S management by relating the relevant clauses of 45006 to the PDCA cycle, as outlined below.

- Plan: plan what needs to be done for the organization to work safely.
- Do: do what the organization has planned to do.
- Check: see how well it is working.
- Act: take actions to improve or change controls that are not effective.



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Context and Risk

ISO 45006 is not intended to be a single step-by-step set of recommendations. The guidance standard provides a roadmap to enable ongoing continual improvement to process and programs and ensure the organization responds to incidents of infectious diseases, including epidemics and pandemics.”

Acquire and maintain awareness of known and emerging infectious diseases and how these illness can impact the organization

- External Issues
- Internal Issues
- Diversity issue related to your organization



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Characteristics of infectious diseases

- a) virulence (severity) of the infectious agent causing the disease;
- b) likelihood of transmission;
- c) contagious or not;
- d) incubation period;
- e) time frame during which people can transmit a contagious disease;
- f) length of time an infectious agent remains infectious on contaminated objects or materials;
- g) symptoms related to the infectious disease;
- h) sources and modes of transmission.





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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Leadership and worker participation

When an infectious disease is known to be, or can be, an issue, top management should:

- a) provide adequate resources to prevent exposure;
- b) consult with, and encourage participation of workers;
- c) provide appropriate support;
- d) protect workers from reprisals;
- e) co-ordinate;
- f) ensure the health and safety of workers in workplaces not under the control of the organization;
- g) seek advice and information from competent and trusted bodies;
- h) implement processes for returning to work and rehabilitation.



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Communication

When an infectious disease is known to be of concern, the organization should provide information and guidance on:

- a) the characteristics of a relevant infectious disease of current concern
  - severity, symptoms and how it is transmitted;
- b) changes relating to entering or moving around a workplace;
- c) changes to work times, locations, activities, work tasks, policies, equipment
  - that *have been made* or *are likely* to occur;
- d) changes in the availability of, or access to, facilities or functions
  - use of rest areas, shared equipment, HR and IT support

Consider Methods of communication





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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Assessment

Organization should have processes to:

- identify infectious agents and other hazards related to infectious diseases, and
- to assess the risks to the health, safety and well-being

The assessment should take into account:

- a) infectious agents and other hazards related to infectious diseases related to work
- b) those infectious diseases most likely to impact workers, the organization, and its operations;
- c) new and emerging diseases;
- d) relevant information on infectious diseases;
- e) people in the workplace (e.g. people with vulnerabilities or specific needs)
- f) existing controls;
- g) conditions in the workplace (e.g. air quality, temperature, ventilation affecting potential exposure).



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# ISO 45006 – Guidance: Determining Controls

## Hierarchy of Controls

- Elimination
  - eliminate situations that can lead to exposure to an infectious agent
  - prevent the infectious agent from getting into the workplace;
- Implement engineering controls to prevent or reduce likelihood of exposure
  - Barriers and increased air exchange;
- Change or create processes that reduce exposure
  - Increased training
  - Safe work procedures.
- Provide PPE to prevent or reduce exposure to an infectious agent



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Determining Controls (cont.)

The selection of controls should take into account

- the characteristics of the disease,
- the vulnerability of workers,
- the organization's activities, and
- the control's effectiveness.

Consider which activities:

- can be performed safely,
- should be modified to carry out work safely,

or if alternative work locations (e.g. working from home) should be used to reduce risk of exposure



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Risk Considerations

Characteristics of an infectious disease that will impact risk and controls:

- a) Transmissibility;
- b) Route of entry;
- c) Sign, Symptoms and Virulence of an infection;
- d) Incubation period;
- e) length of time an infectious agent remains infectious on contaminated objects or materials; and
- f) symptoms related to the infectious disease.



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## ISO 45006 - Psychological health and well-being

Psychosocial hazards arising from infectious diseases can include:

- a) increased workload and reduced support or supervision;
- b) social isolation;
- c) financial issues
- d) change, uncertainty and lack of control;
- e) fear of contracting a disease and the impact on the well-being of workers and other relevant interested parties;
- f) insufficient or unsuitable PPE, or being required to wear PPE or face coverings for extended periods;
- g) bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- h) concerns about childcare or caring for family members.



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Controls

Guidance considers controls for:

- All illnesses
  - Systematic
  - Hygiene
  - Travel for work

Guidance considers controls for:

- Non-Contagious
- Endemic Illness Consideration

- Contagious disease
  - Prevent Exposure/General controls
  - Common Areas
  - Toilets and Handwashing
  - Location of work (home / away from work/multiple places)
  - External entering the building





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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Personal Protective Equipment

The organization should consider the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) with other appropriate higher-level controls for preventing and managing infectious disease.

When selecting PPE, the organization should take into account the characteristics of the infectious disease and ensure that PPE or other protection provided is:

- suitable
- appropriate and
- meets required national, regional or international standards or guidance.

The use of PPE should be prioritized by the organization based on assessment of risk. Supply and resource management concerns for an outbreak.



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Personal Protective Equipment

The organization should consider the use of appropriate PPE to protect workers from risks from infectious diseases, taking into account the characteristics of the infectious agent

- Protective gloves
- Face / Eye Protection
- Respiratory protection
- Face masks



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Emergency preparedness and response

Emergencies relating to infectious agents in the workplace OR other emergencies that can increase spread of infectious diseases

The organization should take into account existing processes for emergencies and the need for changes and adaptations such as:

- a) providing guidance for emergency situations;
- b) changes made in the workplace that can impact emergency response;
- c) reviewing individual assisted emergency evacuation plans;



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Emergency preparedness and response (cont.)

- d) training additional workers for when shortage of trained workers;
- e) provide first aiders with appropriate infectious disease training;
- f) plan/process to run drill and tests of program to respond to potential case;
- g) process to revise plans and learn from previous experiences (tests and drills);
- h) securing and maintaining appropriate stock of PPE and other resources;
- i) establishing processes for disinfecting / decontaminating work areas;
- j) reviewing and updating processes for business continuity.



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Managing suspected or confirmed infectious disease

The organization should have processes to manage and respond to infectious disease, and limit exposure and transmission at work, including processes for:

- understanding the characteristics of the infectious disease:
  - transmission mode,
  - virulence,
  - severity of illness and '
  - duration of infectivity



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Managing suspected or confirmed infectious disease

The organization should have processes ...

- reporting suspected/confirmed cases;
- where to go for medical care;
- verification of illness and confirmation of work related spread
- privacy and confidentiality;
- work position and population likely at risk;
- implementing controls to prevent further transmission of the infectious disease;
- sick leave.



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## ISO 45006 – Guidance: Managing Illness in the workplace

To manage illness in a workplace related to an infectious disease:

- advise those affected to seek assistance from a medical practitioner;
- ensure workers who assist take necessary precautions;
- follow public health authority guidelines, including reporting;
- review work to determine if illness caused by work related source
- ensure regular communication (workers in and out of workplace).



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## ISO 45006: Performance evaluation

To determine how effectively the organization prevents exposure to infectious agents and manages risks related to infectious diseases, the organization should have processes to monitor, measure, analyze and evaluate performance.

The organization should take into account feedback from

- workers,
- worker representatives, and
- other relevant interested parties (e.g. customers, service users).





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