

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Environmental Management Systems

What is an EMS?

- An EMS is a management tool that identifies significant environmental aspects of the BLM's operation and establishes measurable targets and objectives aimed at minimizing the impacts to the environment.

What does an EMS do?

- An EMS shifts the BLM's culture from reactive environmental compliance activities to proactive identification of current and future environmental liabilities. The EMS allows managers to maintain visibility on significant environmental issues.

What is the employee's role in an EMS?

- The employee is responsible for knowing the environmental policy and understanding the environmental components of their job.
- The employee may create or follow processes or procedures that help to minimize environmental impacts from their activities.
- The employee may identify and suggest ways to improve, minimize, or eliminate environmental impacts associated with their on-the-job activities.

What is the manager's role?

- State and Center Directors set the environmental policy which is aligned with the BLM and DOI EMS policy and the State/ Center organizational goals.
- State and Center Directors, with the help of professionals on their staff, identify the significant environmental aspects of their operation and develop measurable targets and objectives to improve, minimize, or eliminate environmental impacts from the organization's operations.
- State and Center Directors conduct an annual review of targets and objectives to insure that the objectives are being met. State and Center Directors may realign targets and objectives and associated resources as internal and external pressures require.

Why do an EMS?

- Executive Order 13423 requires that each agency shall implement "environmental management systems (EMS) at all appropriate organizational levels to ensure (i) use of EMS as the primary management approach for addressing environmental aspects of internal agency operations and activities, including environmental aspects of energy and transportation functions, (ii) establishment of agency objectives and targets to ensure implementation of this order, and (iii) collection, analysis, and reporting of information to measure performance." Additionally, EMS implementation is tracked by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Environmental Stewardship Scorecard.

Is There a Standardized Format for EMS?

- The International Organization for Standards (ISO) is an international body that establishes standards for industry such as Quality (ISO 9000 series) and Environment (ISO 14000 series). ISO 14000 is standard for EMS. The ISO 14000 framework consists of five elements:

1. Environmental Policy
2. Planning
3. Implementation and Operation
4. Checking and Corrective Action
5. Management Review

