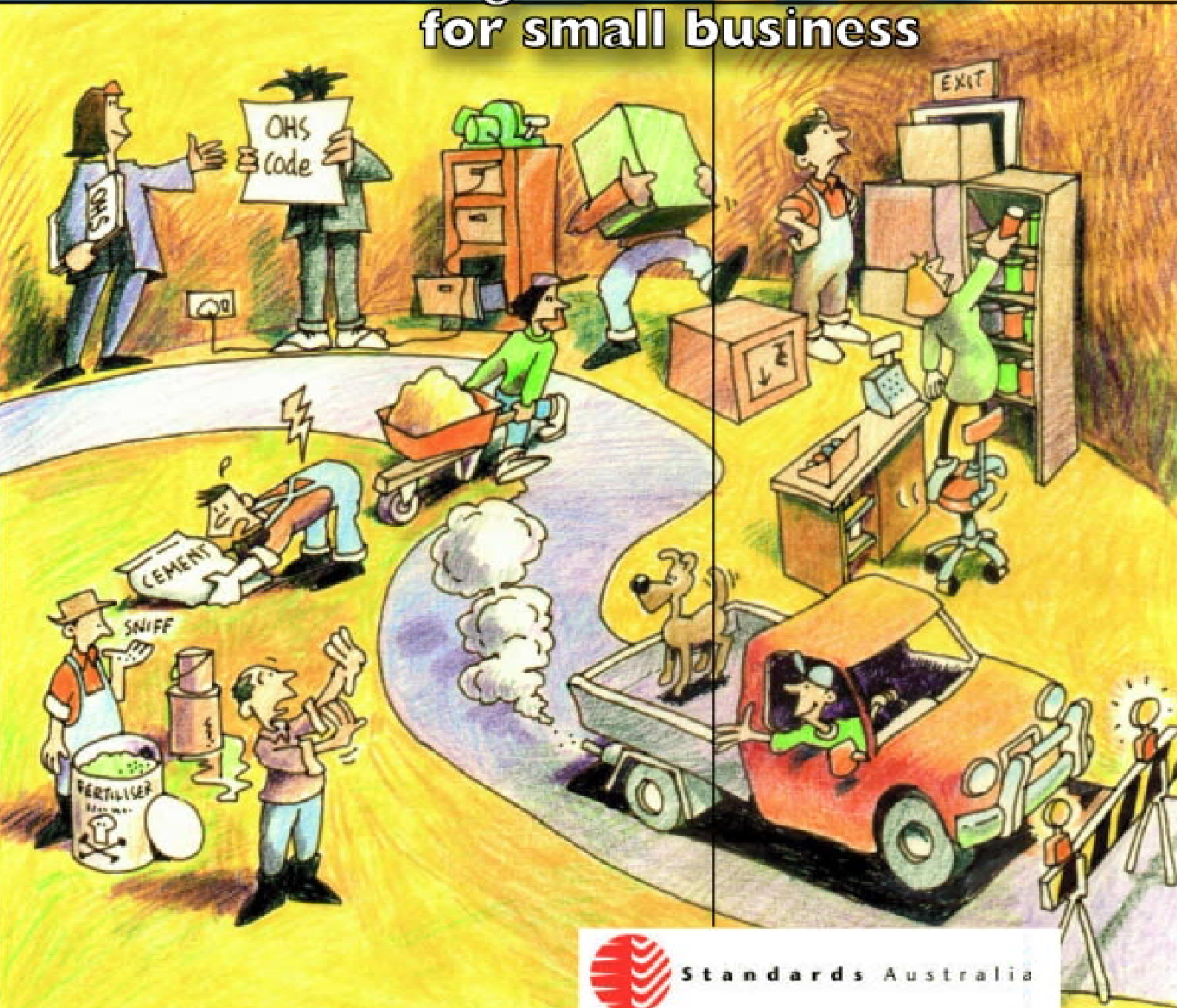


# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS –

## A guide to AS 4801 for small business



HB 211—2001

Occupational health and safety  
management systems  
—A guide to AS 4801  
for small business

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## INTRODUCTION

*‘Even the best management system is defective if it is not properly implemented. The system must be capable of being understood by those expected to implement it.’*  
Longford Royal Commission.

This Handbook is intended for readers who have some sort of occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS) in place already but who wish to develop and improve it so they can claim conformance with AS 4801—2000, *Occupational health and safety management systems—Specification and guidance for use*. Certification is another step you may wish to take, but this Handbook is primarily intended to help those who have opted for self-declaration. In other words, claiming conformance.

This Handbook could be adopted as a tool to enable you to answer questions such as:

- What do we have in place?
- What do we need to do next?
- How do we do it?

Each requirement clause of AS 4801 is given in a text box together with an explanation of what the clause is intending to achieve (titled ‘why?’), together with a simplified guide for self-assessment (titled ‘how?’).

The Handbook does not create additional requirements to those specified in AS 4801 nor does it prescribe mandatory approaches to the implementation of AS 4801. Its guidance is intended as an example in simple terms of how each requirement may be achieved for small business. Other approaches are often equally valid.

Experienced OHSMS auditors will find more comprehensive auditing guidance in other publications, rather than this Handbook. Contact, for example, State Government Agencies, or employer and employee associations.

Examples are given on how Clauses may be applied. These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather help you understand the Clause.

The Handbook aims to help you:

- Develop or modify the system you have in place.
- Run your OHSMS.
- Compare your OHSMS to AS 4801.
- Make necessary changes to your OHSMS.

These steps form part of a spiral of ‘continuous improvement’. You can apply the Handbook at any step in the process, which then lead will to the other steps (see Figure 1 below). Each step needs both ‘documents’ and ‘people’.

The ‘documents’ you need are different for each step. Some documents are those you need to read, i.e. resource material, some documents are those where you write down what you do. As a small business your requirements for either type of document will not be as great as a large organization. As a manager you have neither the time nor the energy to read more than you need, nor to write down more than just enough to show to someone else what has been done. To help you,

this Handbook has pages for you to fill in on how things are done in your business. Just photocopy each page for future use before writing your own notes.

The ‘people’ you need to involve are those in outside organizations who can help you, as well as your own employees. Your people need to be involved to make the OHSMS work. They know what the OHS problems have been in the past and can help in avoiding them in the future.

The companion document to AS 4801, AS/NZS 4804:1997, *Occupational health and management systems—General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques*, is intended to give guidelines to what can be done to put an OHSMS in place. It can be interpreted as having indefinite boundaries to these guidelines. One professional may say to do things one way, another will want more emphasis on something else. The type of business you are engaged in will also vary the amount of resources you need to put toward meeting one requirement, as compared to another. The requirements of AS 4801, on the other hand, are more rigid, and can be seen as being part of the larger recommendations of AS/NZS 4804. They are intended to be less open to interpretation, and contain all that is needed to show to others that an OHSMS is in place. Users of this Handbook should decide the extent to which they implement its content. Some parts of your OHS system will be better than others, some will require more attention.

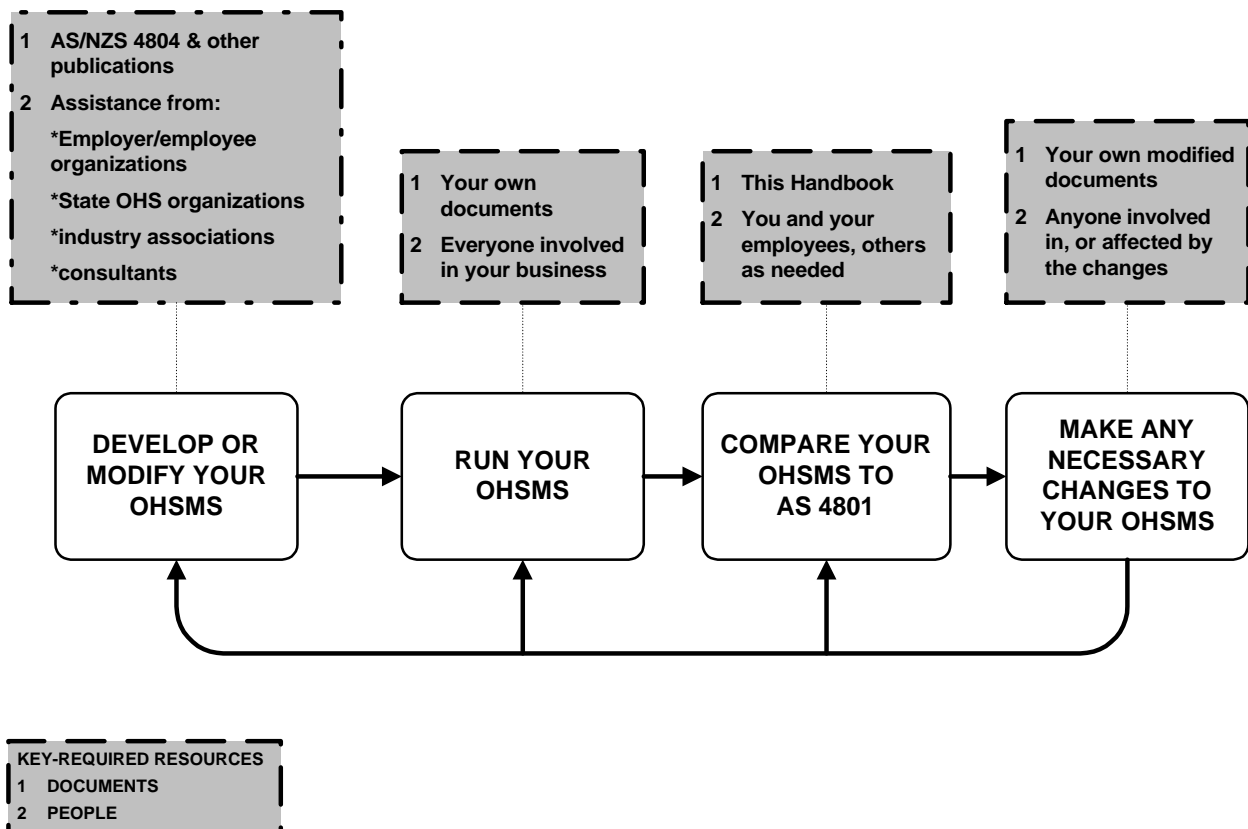


FIGURE 1 HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

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