

What is an EMS?

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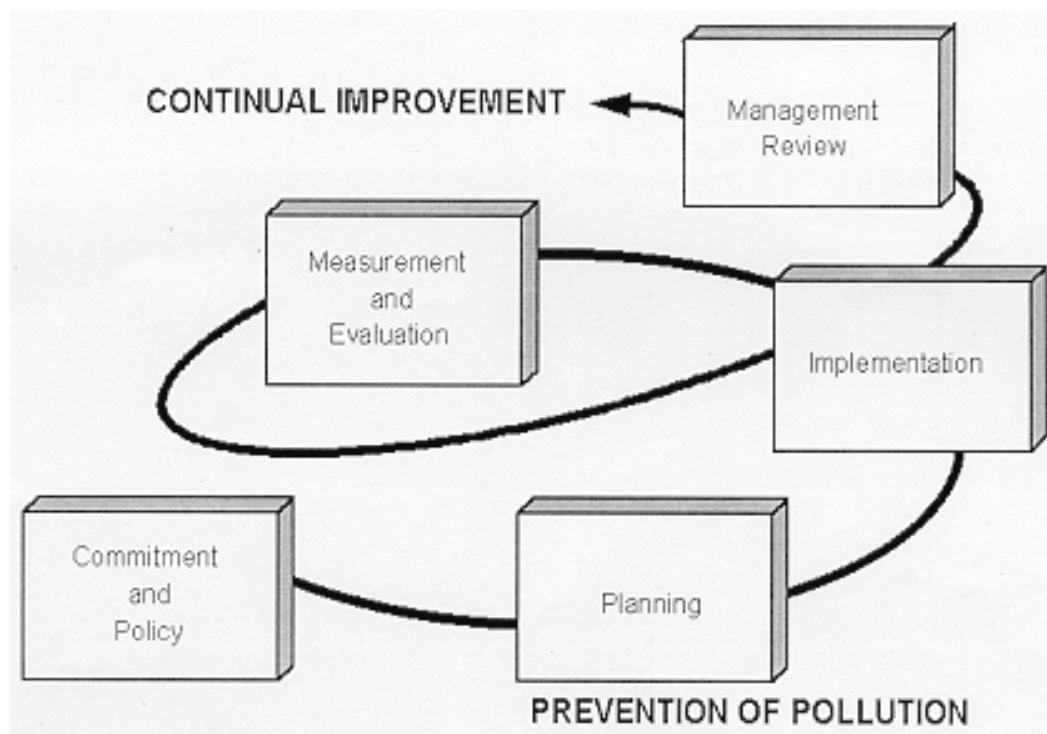
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EMS Basic Elements:

- Reviewing the organization's environmental goals
- Analyzing its environmental impacts and legal requirements
- Setting environmental objectives and targets to reduce environmental impacts and comply with legal requirements
- Establishing programs to meet these objectives and targets
- Monitoring and measuring progress in achieving the objectives
- Ensuring employees' environmental awareness and competence
- Reviewing progress of the EMS and making improvements

An EMS helps organizations address its regulatory demands in a systematic and cost-effective manner. This proactive approach can help reduce the risk of non-compliance and improve health and safety practices for employees and the public.

An EMS can also help address non-regulated issues, such as energy conservation, and can promote stronger operational control and employee stewardship.



Methodology:

EMSs follow Shewart and Deming's well-known Quality Management approach of

“*Plan, Do, Check, Act*” which is a systems methodology rather than the traditional command and control approach.

Personnel evaluate the processes and procedures they use to manage environmental issues and incorporate strong operational controls and environmental roles and responsibilities into existing job descriptions and work instructions. They set objectives and targets for managing their environmental issues. They monitor and measure and evaluate their progress in environmental performance both in areas that are regulated and areas that are not.

The EMS integrates the environment into everyday business operations, and environmental stewardship becomes part of the daily responsibility for across the entire organization, not just in the environmental department.

Part of an organization’s overall management system:

EMSs provide a number of benchmarked tools to manage environmental risk effectively and offer great potential for continuous improvement in compliance and other areas of environmental performance.

Not a substitute for regulatory requirements:

An EMS is not intended to be a substitute for regulatory requirements nor does it offer regulatory relief from the law.

EMSs can improve an organization’s compliance, pollution prevention and overall environmental performance and hopefully build greater confidence with local stakeholders.

EMSs are proactive programs that identify and address the root causes of potential compliance problem areas. Senior management plays an active role in the EMS, monitoring and measuring the organization’s progress toward its environmental goals, and continually looking for ways to improve environmental management.

EMS Baseline/Framework:

The most commonly used framework for an EMS is the one developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for the ISO 14001 standard.

