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# Introduction

The positive impact of introducing occupational safety and health (OSH) management systems at the *organization*<sup>1</sup> level, both on the reduction of hazards and risks and on productivity, is now recognized by governments, employers and workers.

These guidelines on OSH management systems have been developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) according to internationally agreed principles defined by the ILO's tripartite constituents. This tripartite approach provides the strength, flexibility and appropriate basis for the development of a sustainable safety culture in the *organization*. The ILO has therefore developed voluntary guidelines on OSH management systems which reflect the ILO values and instruments relevant to the protection of workers' safety and health.

The practical recommendations of these guidelines are intended for use by all those who have responsibility for occupational safety and health management. They are not legally binding and are not intended to replace national laws, regulations or accepted standards. Their application does not require certification.

The employer is accountable for and has a duty to organize occupational safety and health. The implementation of this OSH management system is one useful approach to fulfilling this duty. The ILO has designed these guidelines as a practical tool for assisting *organizations* and competent institutions as a means of achieving continual improvement in OSH performance.

<sup>1</sup> See glossary for definition.