



January 10, 2020

To: All contractors delivering City of Ottawa construction contracts

**Subject: TECHNICAL BULLETIN ISTB-2020-01  
Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)**

This Technical Bulletin is being issued to make the Ottawa construction industry aware of the phased implementation related to the requirement of an OHSMS as part of the procurement process and prior to awarding a contract. This has been developed in consultation with a working group of members representing the National Capital Heavy Construction Association (NCHCA), Ottawa Construction Association (OCA), General Contractors Association of Ottawa (GCAO) and Commercial Landscape Association of Eastern Ontario (CLAEO). The attached information provides the details on the new requirements, the purpose for the change and the timelines for implementation.

The City of Ottawa has and will continue to work in collaboration with the construction industry on the implementation of this new requirement. This will include holding joint education and information sessions in the upcoming years as contractors work towards achieving their certification and as additional information is gained on health and safety requirements from the Province of Ontario.

For more information, please contact your respective industry association.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alain Gonthier', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alain Gonthier, P.Eng.  
Director, Infrastructure Services

## THE CITY OF OTTAWA, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OTTAWA CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, IS INTRODUCING THE REQUIREMENT FOR A HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

*The City of Ottawa recognizes the importance of safe work environments and is pleased to work collaboratively with the Ottawa construction industry on reinforcing current health and safety practices.*

**Alain Gonthier, P.Eng.**  
Director, Infrastructure Services  
City of Ottawa

*NCHCA encourages health and safety in all aspects of our work and supports the City of Ottawa in its efforts to promote safe work environments.*

**Stephen Goodman, Ph.D., P.Eng.**  
Chair, NCHCA

*The Ottawa Construction Association is pleased to collaboratively work with our partners at the City of Ottawa on adopting a new requirement for contractors bidding City projects to be certified by one of a number of existing national and internationally recognized H & S Management Systems.*

**Wayne Jennings, P.Eng.**  
Chair, OCA

*The Commercial Landscape Association of Eastern Ontario (CLAEO), in keeping with our mission, was honoured to be included in discussions with the City of Ottawa regarding their OHSMS requirements. CLAEO is always encouraging members to promote improvements to Health and Safety.*

**Herman Baguss**  
Director, CLAEO

*The GCAO is proud to have had the opportunity to consult with the City of Ottawa regarding their planned promotion of new OHSMS system. We stand together in our commitment of making construction sites safer.*

**Yves Beaudoin, B.A.A.**  
President, GCAO

### Facts

Employee and worker safety are a shared value between the City of Ottawa and the construction industry. Our employees are our most valuable assets is more than a tagline.

Experience through Vendor Performance Management shows lower scores for health and safety when compared to other factors. We can all do better.

## What is an Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)?

An OHSMS is a framework put in place by employers to manage risks, establish controls, and minimize the incidence of injury and illness to their workers. This is accomplished through identifying, assessing, and controlling risks associated with construction work.

## Why is the City of Ottawa introducing the requirement for an OHSMS?

As a significant buyer of construction services, the City is obligated to ensure that occupational health and safety best practices are employed on all City projects thereby reducing the potential for injuries, illnesses and fatalities. This includes ensuring that an occupational health and safety management system, validated by an external third party, is in place and adhered to by companies that are engaged in City work.

## What is going to change?

A Contractor is already responsible for construction safety and for compliance with the rules, regulations and practices required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*. The Contractor, when requested, is also required to provide the City of Ottawa with a copy of its health and safety policy and program and is required to respond promptly to requests from the City for confirmation that its methods and procedures for carrying out the work comply with the OHSA and associated regulations.

With the added requirement of an OHSMS, as part of the procurement process and prior to awarding a contract, a Contractor will be required provide to the City proof that it has a valid OHSMS that has been certified and independently audited by a third party on programs, procedures and policies.



## **Which OHSMS will the City accept?**

The City does not specify which OHSMS the Contractor should adopt. The City will accept the following, on the basis they have been independently certified and audited:

- ISO 45001:2018 (covering construction activities of the organization),
- CSA Z45001:19,
- OHSAS 18001:2007 (valid until March 2021, when transition to ISO 45001:2018 must be completed for an organization to maintain their certified OHSMS),
- COR™ 2020 (updated Standard to be available to implement in January 2020).

Recognizing that certification programs will evolve over time, any modifications to the accepted programs will be considered through the City of Ottawa annual review of its contract specifications. This includes requirements as defined by the Ontario Chief Prevention Officer, appointed by the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

## **When will the new requirements take effect?**

The City of Ottawa, in consultation with the Ottawa construction industry, is initiating a phased implementation based upon construction contract value. The first phase will demonstrate commitment and support to the concept, and ensure the entire construction/ contracting industry is informed and aware of the City's commitment to a certified OHSMS. The intent of the phased implementation is to provide sufficient time for all contractors to incorporate the needs of the program into their business plans and integrate the necessary elements into their existing health and safety programs.

Timelines for certification are as follows:

- January 1, 2023 – construction contracts valued over \$10 million
- January 1, 2025 – construction contracts valued over \$1 million
- January 1, 2026 – construction contracts and subcontracts valued over \$100 thousand (value to be reviewed over time)

## **Will the new requirements apply to sub-contractors?**

While initially sub-contractors (trades) to Contractors will not be expected to hold a certified OHSMS, they will be expected to adhere to the general contractor's health and safety program. Through this process, the objective is to ensure safe work sites and promote safe work practices for everyone. The requirement for sub-contractors to have a certified OHSMS will become effective on January 1, 2026 for work by a sub-contractor valued over \$100 thousand. This amount will be reviewed over time.

## **What will be done to support contractors through this implementation?**

The City has and will continue to work in collaboration with the construction industry on the implementation of this new requirement. This will include holding joint education and information sessions in the upcoming years as contractors work towards achieving their certification and additional information is gained on health and safety requirements from the Province of Ontario.

*For more information, Contractors are encouraged to contact their respective industry associations.*