



Environmental Management Systems

Achieving ISO 14001 compliance

Gurit Ltd, Isle of Wight

Gurit Ltd (formerly known as SP Systems) have years of experience and expertise in the composite materials industry. They are a world-wide operation with the head office in the UK specialising in high performance materials for a number of markets including the marine industry. As part of the company development, Gurit sought to achieve registration to ISO 14001 to enhance its existing ISO 9001 quality system.



An initial review of company activities was undertaken to establish a basis for evaluation and to provide a structure for an Environmental Management System. An Environmental Steering Group was formed to identify and evaluate all areas of impact the company has on the environment and assess the level of significance. They examined areas of environmental concern including;

- Resource and energy efficiency
- Noise and odour emissions
- Contamination of land
- The impact on local neighbours

From this examination, initiatives were put in place to enhance environmental quality.

The Systems



Reduce, re-use and recycle have been the principles behind their waste reduction measures. By following these principles it has been possible to implement and change a number of practices and products used within the company.

Drums play an important role in the production and distribution process. Used drums contain residues making recycling difficult and costly so plastic liners inside the drum allow them to be re-used and recycled, reducing the amount of waste per drum from 21kg steel to 1 kg plastic. The proportion of liquid raw material arriving by tanker has increased therefore reducing the number of 200 litre drums requiring recycling.

Gurit uses recycled materials where possible for example the introduction of new plugs that are cheaper, stronger and lighter than the current woodchip alternative and can be recycled are expected to save the company **£3500**. In the spirit of ISO 14001 and the requirement for continual improvement, progress can be seen. From 2003, when 33% of waste was recycled, the figures have steadily risen, 2004 saw a rate of 37% and in 2005 it was up to 46%. This was due to an increased focus on waste segregation for recycling. More cardboard and plastic was diverted from landfill. Office paper is now separately collected and sent for pulping. A recent campaign has resulted in a customer being found for waste carbon fibre that was previously thrown away. All of these initiatives combine to generate huge cost savings.

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Making the environment second nature

- Coated process backing paper is re-rolled and used again; after it has been used twice it is recycled into backing paper for labels. Savings of **£250,000** in raw material costs and recycling 414 tonnes of used paper saved another **£18,500** in one year.
- A cardboard baler transforms cardboard waste to recyclable material and in a year 81 tonnes of cardboard saved **£4500** in landfill costs.
- 10,000 wooden pallets were recycled over the course of a year saving **£17,500** in disposal costs.
- Recycling 7,500 storage drums diverted 155 tonnes of waste from landfill and aluminium cans and printer cartridges are collected and sent to a charity for recycling.

The company has also encouraged employees to use sustainable transport by operating mini-buses and shuttle buses, promoting car sharing, providing bicycles for site use, constructing a link to the islands cycle network and installing secure cycle storage and showers.

The Results

Gurits compliance to ISO 14001 ensures that all their decisions are made with full knowledge of their impact on the environment. The Environmental Steering Group identifies new processes and changes to current procedures and carries out formal evaluations whenever necessary. The proposed process is given a rating and a decision is based on that score. For example, the new building for Gurits headquarters underwent a full examination before construction commenced to examine issues such as noise pollution, efficient air conditioning and insulation. Such considerations have not gone unnoticed and in 2004 what was then SP Systems were rewarded by winning the SEEDA Sustainable Business of the Year Award.



The Facts

ISO 14001 is the cornerstone of the ISO 14000 series of International Environmental Management standards. It develops a framework for an environmental management system against which a business or organisation can be certified by a third party and amongst other things provides reassurance and demonstration of environmental compliance. It can be obtained on its own or as part of an environmental management system. These create a structure for businesses and organisations to take responsibility and control of their environmental impacts.

The Environment Agency state that large companies should adopt internationally recognised Environmental Management Systems such as ISO 14001 and recommend smaller companies should consider signing up with Project Acorn (DTI/DETR) or visit NetRegs website to help them understand their environmental responsibilities.



About Gurit Ltd

We have featured just a few of the initiatives Gurit Ltd have in place to promote environmental sustainability showing that these will also have economic, business, and social benefits. In 10 years, turnover has increased significantly and they are one of the largest private employers on the Isle of Wight. They have demonstrated that economic growth can be achieved within the framework of an Environmental Management System.

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