

This factsheet provides a brief comparison of [ISO 45003 – OHS Management – Psychological health and safety at work – guidelines for managing psychosocial risks](#)¹ released in 2021 and the recently published [SafeWork Australia Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#)²

Standards vs Code of Practice

In general terms codes of practice provides detailed information on how you can achieve the standards required under the work health and safety (WHS) laws. These do not replace the WHS laws, but codes of practice can be issued to help make understanding what you must do a little easier.

Similarities: ISO 45003 and Model Code of Practice

There are many common areas between ISO 45003 and the Code of Practice. Both documents address psychological health sources of harm and potential risk factors covering both job demands and job resources. Both of these documents provide guidance on the management of psychosocial workplace factors in relation to:

- Design or management of work
- Process and system
- Working environment
- Plant and equipment
- Interactions, cultures, values, and behaviours.



Interestingly, both documents are very limited in their guidance on what an outcome may be for a worker. For a more detailed breakdown of potential work outcomes, refer to Table 2 below.

Differences: ISO 45003 vs Model Code of Practice

ISO 45003

One of the most obvious differences between ISO 45003 and the Code of Practice is the structure of the guidance. ISO 45003 provides broader considerations to enable alignment with ISO 45001 OHS management systems (Plan-Do-Check-Act). This guidance is great for organisations with mature systems who can simply integrate the management of psychosocial factors into existing systems and practices. For more information on the relationship with ISO 45001, refer to our [ISO 45003 vs 45001 blog](#).

ISO 45003 provides a greater guidance on the following areas:

- **Job Demands:** Greater focus on job security, uncertainty regarding work availability, non-standard employment that is low paid and/or insecure and working in situations that are not covered or protected by traditional employment laws or social protections.
- **Job Resources:** Greater focus on team and work group cohesion. It also provides a more detailed outline of leadership behaviours and activities Leaders can undertake.
- **Worker Outcomes:** Satisfaction, engagement, productivity, poor behaviours, e.g., substance misuse
- **Definitions:** Provides more comprehensive definitions, e.g., wellbeing: physical, mental, social, and cognitive health.

Model Code of Practice

Compared to ISO 45003, the Code of Practice is structured to align with operational risk management principles (ID-Assess-Control-Review-Record-Investigations). Other key differences include the emphasis on trauma, emotional demands, and empathetic leadership. Compared to ISO 45003, the Code of Practice has a greater focus on the following areas:

- **Job Demands:** Greater focus on trauma and emotional demands.
- **Job Resources:** Greater focus on empathetic leadership.
- **Appendix:** Provides an example Risk Register.

Summary: ISO 45003 vs Model Code of Practice

A summary of key differences between ISO 45003 vs Code of Practice are outlined in Table 1 below

Components	ISO 45003	Model Code of Practice
Audience	International	Australia
Structure	Management system focus, e.g. Plan-Do-Check-Act	Risk management focus, e.g. ID-Assess-Control-Review-Record-Investigations
Job Demands	Greater focus on job security	Greater focus on trauma and emotional demands
Job Resources	Greater focus on team and work group cohesion. More detailed outline of leadership behaviours	Greater emphasis on empathetic leadership
Work Outcomes	Greater focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction, engagement, and productivity • Poor behaviours, e.g., substance misuse 	Great focus on burnout outcomes
Hazard vs Risk Terminology	Risk focus	Uses the term hazard and risk interchangeably
Other	Provides more comprehensive definitions, e.g., wellbeing: physical, mental, social, and cognitive health	Provides an example Risk Register

Table 1: ISO 45003 vs Model Code of Practice Summary

In collaboration with the [Health and Safety Index](#), [FEFO Consulting](#) use online assessments to measure health *and* safety performance supported by reliable benchmarks.

Measure - Select from a range of available **Diagnostic (Dx)** survey tools along a spectrum of broad **Health & Safety** aspects to more specific areas of **Wellbeing** and **Psychosocial** factors to obtain reliable data from your workforce.

Focus - Learn and understand specific areas of exposure, job demands, job resources and both worker outcomes.

Act - Prevent, Respond and Promote.



Psychosocial Hazard Factsheet

ISO 45003 vs Model Code of Practice

Detailed Comparison: ISO 45003 vs Code of Practice

A more detailed comparison between ISO 45003 vs Code of Practice is summarised in Table 2 below.

Psychosocial Factors	ISO 45003	Code of Practice	Comments	
Job Demands	Bullying & harassment	•	•	
	Cognitive & Task Demand	•	•	
	Communication	•	•	
	Conditions & Experience	•	•	
	Remote and isolated work	•	•	
	Role ambiguity	•	•	
	Trauma		•	Code of Practice: Greater focus on trauma
	Violence and aggression	•	•	
	Work Balance & Variety	•	•	
	Work Conflict	•	•	
	Work Hours	•	•	ISO 45003: Inflexible, unpredictable, unsociable, and fragmented
	Workload	•	•	ISO 45003: Work overload/underload and continual deadlines Code of Practice: Greater emphasis on emotional work demands
	Time Pressures	•	•	
Job Resources	Change Management	•	•	
	Fair & Just	•	•	
	Inclusion	•	•	
	Job Support	•	•	ISO 45003: Leadership behaviours, e.g., setting clear expectations, failing to listen, withholding information, communication, accountability, and decision making Code of Practice: Greater emphasis on empathetic leadership
	Job Control	•	•	
	Job Security	•		
	Personal/Career Development	•	•	ISO 45003: Greater focus on career development
	Praise & Recognition	•	•	
Worker Outcomes	Team & Group Cohesion	•	ISO 45003: Greater focus on team & workgroup effectiveness	
	Engagement	•	ISO 45003: Worker satisfaction, engagement, and productivity	
	Leave Intention		Limited in both documents	
	Sleep	•	•	
	Job Burnout		•	Code of Practice: Burnout outcomes
	Pain			ISO 45003: cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders Code of Practice: Musculoskeletal disorders
	Substance Misuse	•		ISO 45003 worker poor behaviours, e.g., substance misuse
Impact on Mental Health	•	•	ISO 45003: Anxiety & depression Code of Practice: Anxiety & depression, PTSD	

Table 2: ISO 45003 vs Code of Practice Detailed

If you need assistance with Health and Safety, Wellbeing or Psychosocial maturity assessments, risk assessments, strategy, training, or other specific interventions – contact us today via [email](#) or call [+61 1300 909 649](#).