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The ISO 14000 Environmental Management Standards: An Alternative to "Command and Control"?

by John B. McVaugh, P.E., R.E.M.

"A company that registers to ISO 14001 should never see a regulator again."

James Seif, Secretary, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

The above statement is a strong endorsement for an emerging set of voluntary standards by one of the nation's top state environmental regulators. The U.S. EPA also sees adoption of the 14000 standards by industry as a means for leveraging its dwindling enforcement resources for even greater environmental protection. Why were these standards created? Why are companies beginning to use them even before they are officially published, and what are the perceived benefits? Why are they being used by foreign governments when U.S. exploration and production companies want to drill? And how can this "systems approach" provide assurance of greater

environmental protection than the traditional "Command and Control" strategy used by U.S. regulatory agencies for the past 25 years? The presenter will answer these questions as he demonstrates the compatibility of ISO 14001 with modern business and quality management practices.

Biographical Sketch

Jack McVaugh is a chemical engineer with a Master's degree in environmental engineering. Mr. McVaugh was Manager, Environmental Affairs for Akzo Chemicals Inc., where he was responsible for a waste elimination program, environmental auditing activity, and management of environmental control projects in the U.S., Canada, and Brazil. In 1994, Mr. McVaugh founded Environmental Technology & Management to utilize industrial experience in environ-

mental, quality, and operations management to help companies gain control of their environmental affairs. He is involved

with the development of the ISO 14000 series of International Environmental Management Standards through membership in the U.S. Technical Advisory Group to ISO Technical Committee 207. He is also an adjunct lecturer in environmental management systems at the University of Houston, Clear Lake. ■

