Working Material 1.9

Identifying Environmental Aspects and Impacts

ISO 14001:2026 · Material date: 25 October 2026

This sheet puts the working parts of subchapter 1.9 into editable form: the Verification Pact, the review questions, the common mistakes as a self-check and the Operative Synthesis as an action plan. The empty columns are for your property. The reasoning behind each row is in the book.

GUIDING QUESTION

An aspects register built by walking through a typical Tuesday will faithfully capture every aspect that happens on a typical Tuesday. What does it miss about the one week a year that looks nothing like a Tuesday at all?

Verification Pact: Market Claims Against the Standard

The first three columns are copied from the book. In the last one, note whether this claim circulates in your property — in a proposal, a brochure, a supplier's pitch or your own documents — and what you now hold instead.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A thorough walkthrough during a normal operating period satisfies the aspects identification requirement	No	Clause 6.1.2 itself requires abnormal conditions and reasonably foreseeable emergency situations to be taken into account, which a normal-period walkthrough cannot capture by construction	
Only activities occurring daily or routinely need to be assessed for significance	No	Annual, periodic, or infrequent activities are explicitly within scope and are frequently among the most significant precisely because of their concentration or scale	
A legacy procedure that predates the environmental management system is grandfathered and does not need assessment	No	The clause applies to all of the organisation's activities, products, and services within scope, regardless of when a given procedure originated	
Aspects identification is complete once performed at system launch	No	Clause 6.1.2 requires consideration of changes, including new or modified activities — a static, one-time identification does not meet an ongoing requirement	
Only aspects the organisation directly controls need to be identified; influenced aspects are optional	No	The clause names both controlled and influenced aspects explicitly, without distinguishing one as optional	
A life cycle perspective requires a full formal life cycle assessment	No	Annex A clarifies that a detailed life cycle assessment is not required; a general understanding of life cycle stages relevant to the organisation's activities is sufficient	

A Checklist for the Next Aspects Review

Answer each question with Yes, Partly, No or N.A., and name the evidence: a record, a date, a person, a place someone can go and look. An answer without evidence is an opinion.

Question	Why it matters	Answer	Evidence
Was our register built from an operating calendar, or from an observation window?	The single methodological choice this entire subchapter turns on		
Have we reviewed maintenance and engineering work orders across at least two full years for undocumented periodic activities?	This is where the Queenstown gap would most reliably have surfaced		
For every long-standing procedure, has anyone ever formally asked whether it needs assessment, or has its long history been mistaken for prior approval?	Legacy procedures are not grandfathered under the standard, however long they predate the management system		
Have we applied significance criteria — scale, severity, frequency, regulatory concern, stakeholder concern — to every identified aspect, not only the ones that seemed significant at a glance?	An aspect can look routine and still score significant once assessed honestly against these criteria		
Does our review distinguish activities the organisation controls from those it can only influence?	Both categories are within scope; treating influenced aspects as optional leaves a gap the standard does not permit		

Common Mistakes — Self-Check

Tick every mistake you recognise in your own property today, and write next to it where you saw it. A ticked box is not a nonconformity; it is a place to look before an auditor or an incident does.

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Building an aspects register entirely from direct observation during a limited window, without considering what that window structurally cannot capture.	
☐	Treating abnormal and emergency conditions as optional extensions of normal-condition identification rather than distinct required categories.	
☐	Assuming a legacy procedure predating the management system is grandfathered from assessment.	
☐	Failing to compile and review a full annual operating calendar as part of the identification process.	
☐	Treating infrequent, concentrated activities as lower priority than frequent, diluted ones, without assessing actual significance.	
☐	Reviewing maintenance and engineering work orders only for cost or scheduling purposes, never for undocumented environmental aspects.	
☐	Fixing a single discovered gap without reviewing whether the underlying identification method produced other, stillundiscovered gaps of the same kind.	
☐	Assuming aspects the organisation can only influence, rather than control, fall outside the identification requirement.	

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Treating aspects identification as complete at system launch rather than as an ongoing requirement responsive to change.	
☐	Requiring a full formal life cycle assessment where a general, proportionate life cycle understanding would satisfy the standard.	

Operative Synthesis — Action Plan

The three horizons and their actions are copied from the book. Owner and due date are yours to fill: an action without both is a wish.

Horizon	Action from the book	Owner	Due date
Act on immediately	Ask engineering and maintenance staff directly: what do we do here once a year, or less often, that no one outside this department would think to mention? The answer is very likely to include at least one aspect the current register has never assessed.		
Plan for	Compile a full annual operating calendar covering every recurring activity regardless of frequency; review maintenance and engineering work orders across at least the past two years specifically for undocumented periodic activities; and add a standing question to every aspects review distinguishing genuinely new activities from longstanding ones never formally assessed.		
Monitor going forward	Track the age and origin of every entry in the significant aspects register — when it was identified, and whether identification occurred through structured calendar review or incidental observation. An entry that has never been reviewed through the structured method deserves particular scrutiny, regardless of how long it has sat in the register unquestioned.		

> **WHAT THIS SHEET IS NOT**
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> *ISO 14001 does not prescribe this form. No clause asks for this worksheet, its columns or a register of market claims; the standard sets requirements and leaves the means to the organisation. This sheet is a working aid drawn from the book: use it, change it or set it aside. Where it touches a requirement, the text of ISO 14001:2026 is the authority, not this page — and nothing on it replaces your own reading of that text.*

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