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The 10 Most Impactful Changes in ISO 9001:2026

What Sets the New Edition Apart from ISO 9001:2015

ISO 9001:2026, the sixth edition of the world's most widely used quality management standard, was published on 16 September 2026 and replaces ISO 9001:2015. It is an update, not a rewrite: the 10-clause structure, the process approach, PDCA and the seven quality management principles are unchanged. Whether you are certifying for the first time or transitioning an established system, these are the ten changes that matter most in day-to-day practice.

1. Quality Culture and Ethical Behaviour

Top management must promote a quality culture and ethical behaviour (5.1.1), and everyone working under your control must be aware of them (7.3). Auditors will interview people at all levels; your code of conduct, onboarding, and response to problems are the evidence.

2. Risks and Opportunities Are Now Separate

Clause 6.1 now has separate subclauses for risks (6.1.2) and opportunities (6.1.3). Both must be determined, analysed and evaluated, and the effectiveness of each is reported separately in performance evaluation (9.1.3) and management review (9.3.2). Splitting your register into two tabs is not enough; show your reasoning and an effectiveness check.

3. Stronger Planning of Changes

Clause 6.3 grows from four considerations to seven, adding how a change will be communicated, how its effectiveness will be monitored, and how the results will be reviewed. Update your change form or procedure and keep evidence for significant changes such as ERP rollouts, reorganizations, or facility moves.

4. Climate Change in Your Context

The 2024 amendment is now permanent text. You must determine whether climate change is a relevant issue (4.1), and interested parties may have climate-related requirements (4.2). A short documented determination with reasoning is enough for most organizations; leaving it out is a certain finding.

5. Interested Parties: Decide What the QMS Addresses

Clause 4.2 now requires you to determine which interested-party requirements the QMS will address, and management review must cover changes in interested-party needs and expectations (9.3.2). Review your interested-party list on a set cadence, not once.

6. Disruption and Contingency

Risks to supply during and after a disruption are called out (6.1.2), and customer communication must cover contingency actions, including disruption to supply (8.2.1). Define how customers are informed when something goes wrong.

7. Terms and Definitions in Clause 3

Clause 3 now defines 23 core terms rather than pointing to ISO 9000 alone. Risk is the effect of uncertainty, positive or negative, which underpins the opportunity-based thinking top management must promote alongside risk-based thinking (5.1.1).

8. Improvement Consolidated

Clauses 10.1 General and 10.3 Continual improvement are merged into a single 10.1 Continual improvement, and processes are added to the list of things you must improve. Remove references to 10.3 from your documentation.

9. New Documented Information Wording

"Retain" and "maintain" are replaced with "shall be available as documented information" and "shall be available as evidence of." The obligations are the same and no new mandatory documents are added, but update procedures that mirrored the old verbs. Management review "outputs" also become "results."

10. Renumbering and a Rewritten Annex A

Most clause numbers are unchanged, but 6.1.2 is split, 9.2 gains subclause titles, and 10.3 is gone. Annex A is rewritten to follow the clause structure and Annex B is removed. Update your manual, procedure cross-references, and audit checklists.

TRANSITION TIMELINE: WHAT CERTIFIED ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO KNOW

Certificates to ISO 9001:2015 remain valid through a transition period expected to run three years from publication, ending around September 2029, subject to confirmation from the accreditation community and your certification body. No new mandatory documents are required. Certification bodies typically stop auditing to the old edition well before the deadline and auditor capacity gets tight in the final year, so plan your transition audit at a 2027 or 2028 surveillance visit, and complete an internal audit and management review against the 2026 edition before the auditor arrives.

Transitioning to ISO 9001:2026?

Let’s start with a conversation - no jargon, no pressure. We’ll assess your current system against ISO 9001:2026, close the gaps, and get your team ready for the transition audit. Call (844) MY-ISO-PRO or email Sales@MyISOFamily.com.