

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Sun Tran: ISO 14001 Certification



LRQA
Measure the Difference

History in the Making

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In 2003, the Federal Transit Administration issued an invitation to 100 United States transit agencies with the highest levels of ridership encouraging them to apply for an FTA-sponsored program to receive assistance and training in implementing an Environmental Management System (EMS).

As one of the 10 transit agencies selected to participate in the program, Sun Tran worked diligently to develop a set of operational procedures to assure compliance with federal, state and local environmental regulations and then selected Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance to achieve certification.

Background | Celebrating over 30 years of service, Sun Tran is the primary provider of public transportation in the Tucson, Arizona Metropolitan area. At the time of ISO 14001 certification, Sun Tran operated a fleet of 189 diesel, dual diesel/CNG and CNG buses that assisted an average of 57,000 riders each weekday to and from their destinations. Their mission is simple yet important: to provide safe, well-maintained and cost effective public transportation with a team of innovative and diverse employees, dedicated to its customers, the environment and the community.

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Implementing an Environmental Management System | Environmental management has become a clear driver for Sun Tran's operations which led to the implementation of an EMS whose compliance to the ISO 14001 environmental standard would result in improved efficiency, waste minimization and more cost-effective operation.

In developing their EMS, Sun Tran wanted to be at the forefront in environmental management; they were not only committed to meeting minimum

environmental standards, they were committed to exceeding them. As a result, Sun Tran became the first U.S. transit maintenance facility to receive certification to the ISO 14001 environmental management standard.

Their efforts resulted in an EMS that identifies four significant aspects of environmental management: storm water, wastewater, hazardous waste and coolant – all extremely important areas to consider when minimizing Sun Tran's environmental impact.

The Road to Certification | Achieving certification to ISO 14001 is far from easy; however, Sun Tran's commitment to maintaining a safe and clean environment, preventing pollution and preserving the community's natural resources paved the way for a successful EMS certification.

The ISO 14001 certification standard, established by the International Organization for Standardization, assists companies in identifying, prioritizing and managing their environmental risks as part of their normal business practices. The standard addresses issues such as energy conservation, efficient water use, materials recycling, waste water minimization, vehicle emissions reduction, improved fueling operations, hazardous materials management and the like.

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As a result, certification to ISO 14001 can provide significant concrete economic benefits including reduced raw material/resource use, reduced energy consumption, improved process efficiency and reduced waste generation and disposal costs.



“Sun Tran excelled by earning an uncommon 100 percent compliance” when LRQA assessed the EMS against the requirements of the ISO 14001 standard, said George G. Caria, Sun Tran General Manager at the time of ISO 14001 certification. LRQA Assessor Andrea Bockrath added, “Sun Tran did exceptionally well during their assessment. Where most other organizations have significant findings, Sun Tran had none, which is excellent”.

Clear Benefits | Since developing and adopting an EMS certified to ISO 14001, Sun Tran has seen a number of key benefits, including:

- Increased environmental awareness and EMS stewardship among management, employees and its vendors
- Increased standardization of work flow from operating procedures, assuring activities are efficient and environmentally sensitive
- Anticipation of a significant decrease in waste generation and greater attention to resource management, resulting in eventual cost savings
- Increased employee training and positive departmental interaction
- A 65% reduction in hazardous waste generated by the maintenance facility, an important aspect that has significant positive effects and has lowered disposal costs borne by the City of Tucson’s Fire Department. As a result, Sun Tran is now known as a “conditionally exempt small quantity generator.”
- The ability to maintain its non-significant water user status, resulting in a significant cost savings for the City of Tucson, which would have been required to pay the fees for a significant water user

Continual Improvement | Sun Tran’s EMS implementation has allowed focus on key objectives that would further the positive impacts of an environmentally conscious transit organization. One of those objectives was to convert their diesel buses to use clean-burning fuels. Sun Tran has made significant headway in this area, and in October 2005, Sun Tran acquired 38 new low-floor buses that run on diesel fuel with 20 percent bio content (B20). This important step allows the buses to use fuel that reduces emissions of both carbon monoxide and particulate matter by 12 percent over conventional diesel. Currently nearly 90 percent of Sun Tran’s fleet is designed to use clean-burning fuels, and Sun Tran expects to accept an order of 12 new bio-diesel buses in early 2007, also replacing diesel buses.

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Relationship with LRQA | Certification to the internationally recognized EMS standard ISO 14001 from an accredited and reputable registrar has become a preferred choice for organizations looking to demonstrate their environmental credentials.

In fact, one of the key steps to beginning certification is the selection of a certification body that offers capability and professionalism.

Having issued over 5,565 approvals at more than 6,690 sites to ISO 14001, LRQA became an ideal candidate for Sun Tran’s EMS certification.

According to Steve Boberg, Sun Tran EMS Manager, “Our experience with LRQA during the assessments has been very positive. We are always looking for ways to improve, and the assessors have made several suggestions that we have pursued.”

For additional information about LRQA products and services, please contact a **Business Advisor at 281-646-6390** or visit us online at www.lrqausa.com.

