

# **ISO 14001 and Environmental Performance in an Automotive Manufacturing Plant**

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## **Abstract**

This study presented a discussion of ISO 14001 within the context of the corporate community and identified significant inconsistencies raised in the literature in an attempt to increase the understanding of ISO 14001 and what certification actually means. The major objective was to determine the connection between ISO 14001 adoption and environmental performance, expressed as continual improvement, at an automotive manufacturing plant. This report revealed many challenges associated with assessing environmental performance including the role external variables (such as pilot launches and weather conditions) play in the context of performance, irrespective of ISO 14001. The methods used to infer environmental performance and assess continual improvement involved trend analysis post ISO 14001 certification and an assessment of factors affecting the results. The selection of this method was based on the current lack of an effective method to evaluate environmental performance especially in terms of continual improvement. Mere observation of the data alone did not account for factors affecting results and often lead to misleading results regarding environmental performance. Based on the data, clear conclusions whether any improvements observed were specifically related to ISO certification could not be made due to the lack of pre/post certification data and the inability to quantify the effect of pilot launches on each indicator. Unfortunately, it is too early to draw any meaningful conclusions and further research is required to determine how EMSs (based on the ISO framework) affect environmental performance. This study can be used as a benchmark for future studies involving ISO 14001 performance reviews.