ISO 14001:2026 EMS DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

A Complete Auditing Reference for 'Maintain' and 'Retain' Documented Information

Under the revised ISO 14001:2026 standard, organizations must distinguish clearly between active environmental management system (EMS) documentation that is kept up-to-date and historical records that serve as evidence of performance. This checklist compiles every documented information requirement across all clauses (4 through 10) of the standard, categorized by the standard's precise conceptual distinction outlined in Annex A.3.

The Key Conceptual Distinction (Annex A.3):
• **'Shall be available as documented information'** replaces 'maintain documented information'. This represents active system documentation (such as scopes, policies, processes, and objectives) that the organization must **maintain**, keep current, and keep fit-for-purpose.
• **'Documented information shall be available as evidence of'** replaces 'retain documented information as evidence of'. This represents historical, immutable records that the organization must **retain** to provide objective evidence of activities completed or results achieved (e.g., competence records, audit logs, reviews).

Core Documentation Requirements (Clauses 4 – 10)

Clause	Title	Requirement Type	Required Documented Information Description
4.3	**EMS Scope**	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The boundaries and applicability of the EMS. Must define physical and organizational boundaries, activities, products, services, and life cycle control/influence. Must be available to interested parties.
5.2	Environmental Policy	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The environmental policy. Must outline commitments to protect the environment (including pollution prevention, climate mitigation/adaptation, biodiversity), meet compliance obligations, and continually improve. Must be communicated internally and available to interested parties.
6.1.1	Risks & Opportunities — General	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The planning process(es) needed for Clauses 6.1.2 to 6.1.5, to the extent necessary to have confidence they are carried out as planned.
6.1.2	Environmental Aspects	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	Must document: (1) environmental aspects and associated environmental impacts, (2) criteria used to determine significance, and (3) significant aspects. Must take into account normal, abnormal, and emergency situations using a life cycle perspective.
6.1.3	Compliance Obligations	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The compliance obligations of the organization, determined at a sufficiently detailed level and related to its environmental aspects.
6.1.4	Risks & Opportunities	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The specific risks and opportunities that need to be addressed to give assurance, prevent undesired effects (including external effects), and achieve continual improvement.

Clause	Title	Requirement Type	Required Documented Information Description
6.2.1	Environmental Objectives	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The environmental objectives set at relevant functions and levels. Objectives must be consistent with the environmental policy, measurable (if practicable), monitored, and communicated.
7.2	Competence	Available as Evidence of (Retain Record)	Appropriate documented information to show evidence of competence (e.g., training certificates, qualification records, completed performance assessments, or experience records).
7.4.1	Communication	Available as Evidence of (Retain Record)	Appropriate documented information as evidence of the organization's communications (both internal and external, including responses to relevant communications and complaints).
8.1	Operational Planning & Control	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	Operating process(es) needed to meet EMS requirements and implement actions from Clause 6, to the extent necessary to have confidence they are carried out as planned (including operating criteria and process controls).
8.2	Emergency Prep & Response	Available as Documented Information (Maintain)	The process(es) needed to prepare for and respond to potential emergency situations identified in 6.1.2, to the extent necessary to have confidence they are carried out as planned.
9.1.1	Monitoring & Measurement	Available as Evidence of (Retain Record)	Appropriate documented information as evidence of the results of monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation. Must include maintenance and calibration records for monitoring equipment.
9.1.2	Evaluation of Compliance	Available as Evidence of (Retain Record)	Appropriate documented information as evidence of the compliance evaluation result(s), demonstrating that compliance obligations are periodically evaluated.
9.2.2	**Internal Audit Programme**	**Evidence & Program Plan (Mixed Requirement)**	Must document: (1) the audit programme(s) (including frequency, methods, responsibilities), (2) evidence of the implementation of the audit programme(s), and (3) evidence of the audit results.
9.3.3	Management Review Results	Available as Evidence of (Retain Record)	Documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews (conclusions on continuing suitability, adequacy, effectiveness, opportunities for improvement, and needed changes).
10.2	Corrective Action Results	Available as Evidence of (Retain Record)	Documented information as evidence of: (1) the nature of nonconformities encountered and any subsequent actions taken, and (2) the results of any corrective action taken.

Audit Guidelines & Implementation Best Practices

When preparing for an internal or external ISO 14001:2026 certification audit, ensure that documented information is managed in alignment with standard guidelines:

1. No Mandatory Format (Clause 7.5.1 / A.2): The standard does not mandate a specific format or media. Documented information can be on paper, electronic files, digital dashboards, or software tools. You may continue using your organization's preferred terminology (e.g., 'procedures', 'work instructions', or 'records') rather than the standard's technical terminology.

2. Control and Protection (Clause 7.5.3): Ensure all documented information is subject to formal control. This means it must be available where and when it is needed, adequately protected (e.g., version control, access restrictions, backup procedures), and properly stored, **retained**, or disposed of in accordance with both organizational and compliance requirements.

3. Documented Information of External Origin (Clause 7.5.3 / A.7.5): Externally provided documentation deemed necessary for EMS operations (e.g., environmental regulatory approvals, local permits, manufacturer operating manuals, safety data sheets) must be formally identified, registered, and controlled.

4. Auditor Focus on Present-Tense Controls (Clauses 4-10): Auditors will look for active processes to **maintain** current system files (such as policy, objectives, and emergency processes) alongside historical records to **retain** as objective evidence that operations are running exactly as planned (such as compliance evaluations, competence logs, and audit results).

ISO 9001:2026 QUALITY CHECKLIST

A Complete Auditing Reference Based on ISO/FDIS 9001:2026 (Final Draft stage)

In alignment with the structural guidelines of the forthcoming **ISO 9001:2026 FDIS**, this checklist maps all mandatory documented information requirements across Clauses 4 through 10. To facilitate high-accuracy audits, the table below uses the exact conceptual categorization defined in Annex A.3:

> • **Available Documented Information:** Active, dynamic documentation representing management system structures, policies, processes, and objectives that must be actively maintained, updated, and kept fit-for-purpose.
> • **Documented Information Available as Evidence:** Immutable historical records indicating that processes have been performed and objective outcomes or conformity results have been achieved.

Core Documentation Requirements (Clauses 4 – 10)

Clause	Title	Requirement Type Wording	Description of Required Documented Information
4.3	QMS Scope	**Available documented information**	The boundaries and applicability of the quality management system. Must state products/services covered and provide justifications for any non-applicability.
4.4.2 a)	QMS Process Support	**Available documented information**	Operational documentation required to support the operation of processes (e.g., core process flowcharts, operational guidelines, or maps).
4.4.2 b)	QMS Execution Evidence	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence that the processes are being carried out as planned (e.g., production logs, tracking charts, process metric outputs).
5.2.2 a)	Quality Policy	**Available documented information**	The official Quality Policy of the organization. Must outline strategic quality commitment, be communicated, and be available to interested parties.
6.2.1	Quality Objectives	**Available documented information**	Quality objectives set at relevant functions, levels, and processes. Objectives must be consistent with the policy, measurable, and tracked.
7.1.5.1	Measuring Resources Fitness	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence demonstrating that monitoring and measuring resources are fit for their intended purpose (e.g., equipment lists, verification logs).
7.1.5.2	Calibration Traceability	**Available documented information**	The basis used for calibration or verification when no international or national measurement standards exist (custom calibration protocols).

Clause	Title	Requirement Type Wording	Description of Required Documented Information
7.2	Competence Records	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records demonstrating appropriate education, training, qualification, or experience to prove personnel competence.
8.1	Operational Control Plans	**Available documented information**	Information defining the parameters and operational controls to ensure processes are carried out as planned and objectives are met.
8.1	Conformity Evidence	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records confirming that products and services conform to established quality acceptance criteria prior to release.
8.2.3.2	Requirements Review Results	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence showing the results of reviews of customer contracts, orders, and any new or changed requirements for products/services.
8.2.4	Requirement Change Updates	**Available documented information**	Updates made to customer specifications or QMS files when requirements for products/services are modified.
8.3.2 j)	D&M; Planning Evidence	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence that design and development requirements have been systematically met throughout the project lifecycles.
8.3.3	D&M; Input Records	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records detailing design and development inputs (functional, performance, regulatory, or historical lessons-learned data).
8.3.4 f)	D&M; Control logs	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records showing execution of design controls, verification, and validation activities (e.g., peer reviews, simulation results).
8.3.5	D&M; Outputs	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records of design outputs conforming to inputs (e.g., schematics, bill of materials, engineering drawings, assembly guides).
8.3.6	D&M; Change Logs	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence of design changes, results of reviews, change authorizations, and actions taken to prevent adverse impacts.
8.4.1	External Provider Evaluation	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records of evaluation, selection, performance monitoring, and re-evaluation of external suppliers and actions arising therefrom.
8.5.1 a)	Controlled Conditions	**Available documented information**	Information defining product/service characteristics, operational activities to be performed, and specific results to be achieved.
8.5.2 d)	Traceability Logs	**Documented information available as evidence**	Specific unique identifiers and records necessary to enable full traceability when traceability is a mandated requirement.
8.5.3	Customer/Supplier Property	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records detailing what has occurred if customer or external provider property is lost, damaged, or found unsuitable for use.

Clause	Title	Requirement Type Wording	Description of Required Documented Information
8.5.6	Production Change Reviews	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence of production/service provision changes, including review results, authorizing persons, and subsequent corrective actions.
8.6	Product/Service Release	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence of authorized product/service release, demonstrating conformity with acceptance criteria and tracking to the authorizer.
8.7.2	Nonconformity Controls	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records detailing the nonconformity, subsequent actions taken (corrections/containment), concessions obtained, and authorizing authority.
9.1.1	M&M; Results	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records showing the results of monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation of QMS performance and process effectiveness.
9.2.2	Audit Implementation	**Documented information available as evidence**	Evidence of the implementation of the internal audit program(s), audit criteria, scopes, schedules, and specific audit results.
9.3.3	Management Review Outcomes	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records of management review outputs, including decisions on suitability, resources, objectives, and opportunities for improvement.
10.2.2	Corrective Action Records	**Documented information available as evidence**	Records detailing the nature of QMS nonconformities encountered, subsequent correction/containment actions, and results of corrective actions.

Audit Guidelines & Implementation Best Practices (Annex A.2)

1. Terminology Flexibility: The standard's terminology (e.g., 'documented information') is intended to describe requirements, not to impose a naming convention. Your organization remains entirely free to use traditional terms such as 'Procedures', 'SOPs', 'Manuals', or 'Records' in daily operations.
2. Document Media and Storage: Documented information can exist on any media format (paper, cloud, software databases). The primary audit focus is on accessibility, suitability, protection (confidentiality, integrity), and version control.
3. Documented Information of External Origin: External documents necessary for the planning and operation of the QMS (such as regulatory acts, customer blueprints, or calibration manuals) must be identified and controlled accordingly under Clause 7.5.3.2.