

The Internal Responsibility System (IRS)

The very foundation of OHS legislation requires that every employee and contractor shares the responsibility, and is accountable for, safety and environmental protection. The IRS was first named in the 1976 Ham Royal Commission Report as the result of an inquiry into health and safety of uranium mine workers in Ontario. Simply put, the IRS is a method of allocating responsibility, authority and accountability for safety.

The key philosophies behind the Internal Responsibility System include:

- Because the IRS underlies most OHSE Regulations, OHSE plans and programs must be built with an understanding of this system to be successful,
- The IRS is the “people framework” needed for success. The focus is to capture the knowledge, experience, and initiative of each person in the workplace.
- Bottom line: Every person within a company is personally responsible for health, safety and the environment.

The following diagram shows how this system works.

