

Safe & Well Waypoint

INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM (IRS)

BACKGROUND: In the late 1970's the *HAM COMMISSION* introduced an internal responsibility system to the Ontario government in a royal commission report on the health and safety of workers in the mining sector. Working as a miner was an especially hazardous job and the government of the day was committed to improving their safety.

The commission's report, and its recommendations, resulted in creation of a new **law** which we now know as Ontario's ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***, and which applies to workers across the province. Despite the fact that the IRS is not specifically mentioned in the OHS Act it is the foundation of Ontario's worker safety law.

WHAT IS THE IRS?

"The internal responsibility system (IRS) is a system where everyone has direct responsibility for health and safety as an essential part of their job".

(source: Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development)

The IRS supports the notion that all workplace parties (workers, supervisors and employer) have responsibilities in a health and safety system, and each play a role in making the workplace safer.

These responsibilities include:

- Responsibility for workers to report hazards or injuries to their employer
- Responsibility for the employer to take steps to address the concern



WHY IS THE IRS IMPORTANT?

When workers and the employer work together, it creates a partnership that leads to a healthier and safer workplace. A safer workplace means fewer staff injuries, higher engagement and staff satisfaction, and ultimately an increased quality of care for our patients.

(Policy Reference: Staff Incident Investigation, Reporting and Follow-up Policy)

NEXT:

Stay tuned for future communications as we explore specific roles of the workplace parties.