OHS Legislation in Canada – Internal Responsibility System Fact Sheets



WHAT IS THE INTERNAL RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM?

The internal responsibility system puts in place an employee-employer partnership in ensuring a safe and disease free workplace. A health and safety committee is a joint forum for employers and employees working together to improve workplace health and safety.

How does the Internal Responsibility System work?

The internal responsibility system is the underlying philosophy of the occupational health and safety legislation in all Canadian jurisdictions. Its foundation is that everyone in the workplace – both employees and employers – is responsible for his or her own safety and for the safety of co-workers. Acts and regulations do not always impose or prescribe the specific steps to take for compliance. Instead, it holds employers responsible for determining such steps to ensure health and safety of all employees.

Internal responsibility system does the following:

- Establishes responsibility sharing systems
- Promotes safety culture
- Promotes best practice
- Helps develop self reliance
- Ensures compliance

These general provisions give employers the “freedom” to carry out measures and control procedures that are appropriate for their individual workplaces. On the other hand, the challenge for the employers is to know when they have fulfilled all appropriate regulatory requirements.

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