

# Understanding Our Health & Safety Management System

Version 2: August 2021

HSMS Guidance Document 1.0



## One city getting healthier, stronger and better together

This document is part of the City's overall Health & Safety Management System (HSMS) program manual. Readers are encouraged to review the following companion documents:

- Policy SH1 Workplace Safety and Health
- HSMS Guidance Document 1.1 *Understanding HSMS Roles & Responsibilities*
- HSMS Guidance Document 1.2 *Understanding the 3 Worker Rights [and Obligations]*
- HSMS Guidance Document 1.3 *Understanding the Dangerous Work Refusal Process*
- HSMS Guidance Document 1.4 *Understanding Non-Compliance to the HSMS*

### **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

HSMS Guidance Document 1.0 *Understanding Our Health & Safety Management System* has been designed to provide readers with an expanded explanation of the intent and structure of the City's Health & Safety Management System (HSMS).

### **REVIEW OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This document will be reviewed every three years by People & Culture – Healthy Organization.

### **VERSION HISTORY**

Version 1	Dec 2019	new document
Version 2	Aug 2021	adopted into new City of Lethbridge branding

## What is a Health & Safety Management System?

A Health & Safety Management System (HSMS) is a systemic approach put in place by an employer to minimize the risk of injury and ill health. More specifically, a HSMS strives to promote and maintain the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being for workers.

This is a broad mandate with significant complexity.

### Foundational Concepts

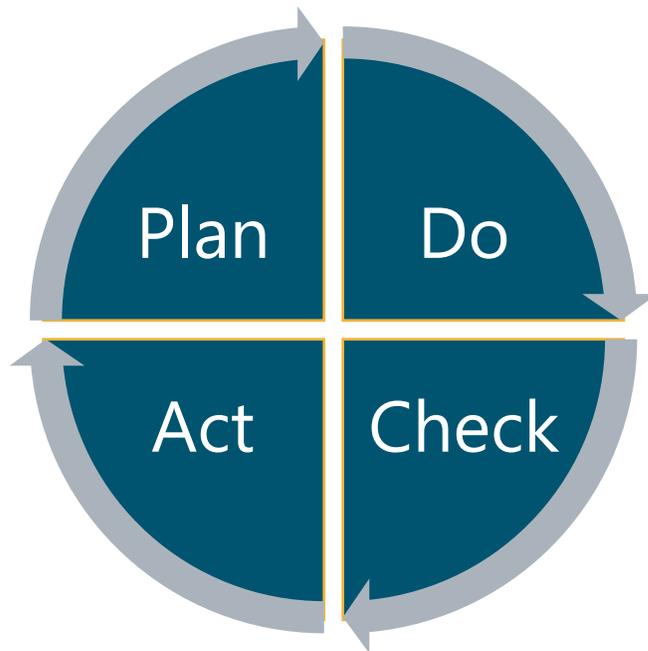
An effective HSMS remains firmly grounded in three foundational concepts: risk management approach, Internal Responsibility System (IRS), and the fundamental OHS worker rights laid out in the Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.



## Foundational Concept 1: Risk Management Approach

There is always the chance that things will not go according to plan – resulting in growth (opportunity), harm (loss) or occasionally a combination of both positive and negative results.

The Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) cycle is an iterative risk management process that supports the continual improvement of a HSMS.



**Plan:** establish the objectives and process necessary to deliver results in accordance with the organization’s safety and health policy;

**Do:** implement the processes as planned;

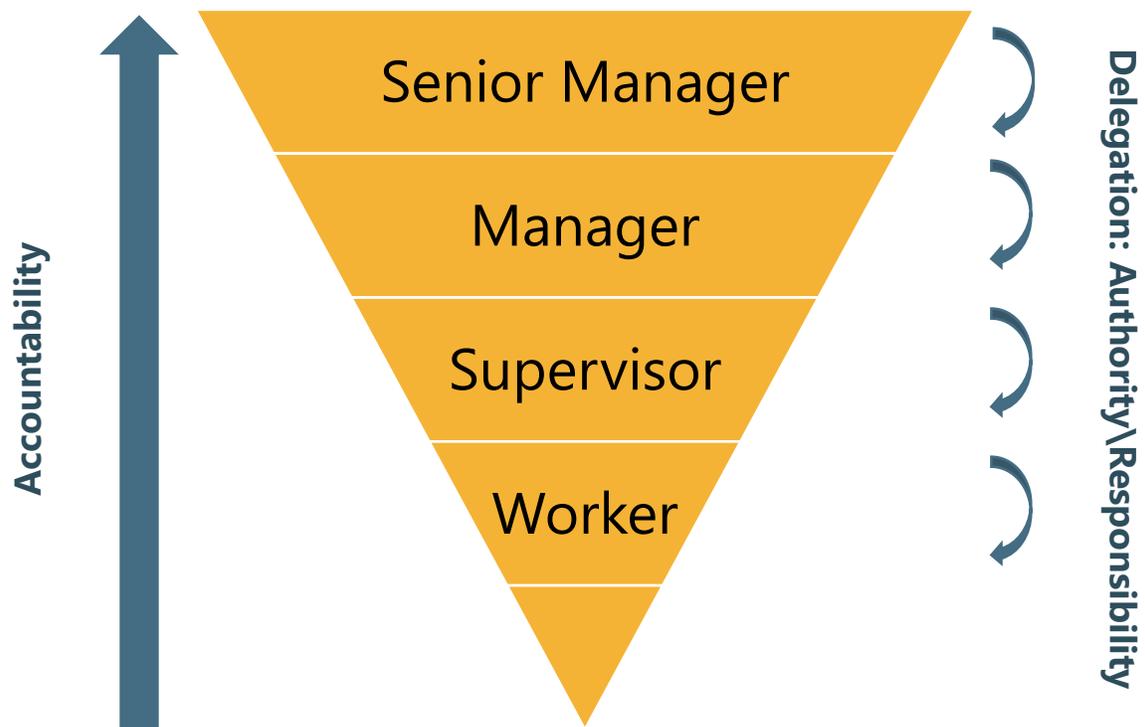
**Check:** monitor and measure activities against the safety and health policy, objectives, legal and other requirements, and report the results;

**Act:** take actions to continually improve safety and health performance.

## Foundational Concept 2: Internal Responsibility System

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation across Canada centres on the Internal Responsibility System (IRS). The IRS requires that everyone in the workplace is responsible to ensure a safe and healthy workplace according to their authority, control, and accountability.

The degree of control a person has over a work site varies, with the employer having the greatest responsibility. All employees of the City of Lethbridge are 'workers' under the Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Authority can be delegated (i.e. manager to coordinator; coordinator to foreman) – accountability cannot. As you move up the accountability hierarchy you still own the responsibilities for all roles below.



An IRS normalizes safety and health practices, making it part of day-to-day work activities and responsibilities. Enabling workers at all levels to address workplace hazard quickly and internally. Reliance on external enforcement to maintain safety and health standards is not part of the IRS.

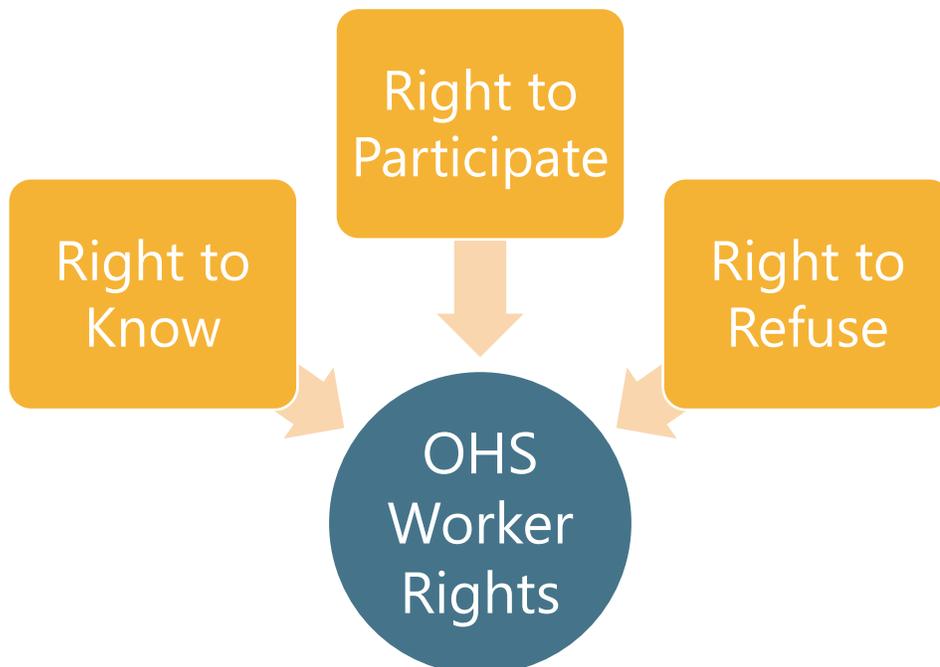
The IRS is a group effort. For it to be effective, all stakeholders (worker, employer, contractor, supplier, union) must work together to identify and address OHS issues for the benefit of all persons on the work site.

### Foundational Concept 3: Fundamental OHS Worker Rights

Three health and safety rights are enshrined in the Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety Act*:

- **Right to know** about potential workplace hazards and have access to basic health and safety information on site.
- **Right to participate** in health and safety discussions and health and safety committees.
- **Right to refuse dangerous work** with protection from any form of reprisal or disciplinary action for doing so.

**Each legislated right also has an associated obligation** – the obligation to engage this right each day, at all levels and in all workplace situations.



## What are the values of the City’s HSMS?

### Accountability

Accountability in a HSMS can be challenging, as it requires humility. Accountability means accepting responsibility for your actions, omissions, conduct and decisions through the complete communication of your observations, motivations, experiences and perspectives. Accountability does not require perfection.

### Collaboration

Collaboration is foundational to our Internal Responsibility System (IRS). Collaboration is two or more people working together, sharing and exchanging ideas, towards a common goal. Collaboration inside our HSMS allows for the consideration of multiple perspectives, encouragement of creativity, balance in decision-making and adoption of synergies.

### Fairness

Fairness is fundamental to our HSMS as it builds trust. Fairness means that, regardless of position, every person will have the natural right to equality of concern (point of view) and respect (dignity) within our workplace.

### Compassion

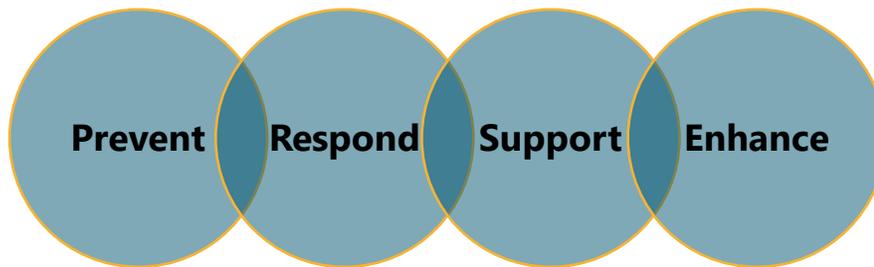
Compassion is a critical value inside our HSMS for achieving social well-being. Social well-being is the extent to which you feel a sense of belonging and social interaction. The workplace is a potential source of strong, healthy relationships that will strengthen our physical and mental fitness, build resilience and charge individual batteries. An authentic HSMS cannot achieve success without compassion.

### Learning

Learning the singular goal of our HSMS investigations. Judgement on ‘how’ or ‘why’ an event or near miss occurred does not begin until all facts are gathered, revealing both the systemic and personal performance vulnerabilities. Controls (to reduce the risk of recurrence to an acceptable level) focus first at the systemic level. All personal conduct vulnerabilities must also be identified and directly addressed. Only reckless conduct will result in discipline.



## What are the goals of the City's HSMS?



### Prevent

#### Prevent work-related injury and ill health

- Report fit-for-work. Only engage in work you are competent to perform.
- Manage all occupational safety and health risk to an acceptable level.
- Focus on the critical risks that may cause death or serious injury and ill health.

### Respond

#### Respond to health and safety risks and incidents early and well

- Focus first on system controls, and then controls to adjust worker behaviour.
- Immediately address disruptive conduct, distress and impairment concerns.
- Guide all injured persons to the appropriate level of care as soon as possible.

### Support

#### Support the recovery of those impacted by work-related injury and ill health

- Focus first on the potential for recovery-at-work.
- Stay appropriately connected with people while recovering off work.
- Collaborate on clear workplace plans for employee & employer success.

### Enhance

#### Enhance worker resilience and general well-being

- Strive for competence in dealing productively with conflict – act early & ask for help.
- Pay attention and reach out if you think someone is in danger or could use help.
- Use the supports and resources offered by the City.

## What is the structure of the City's HSMS?

### 10 System Elements

Formal structure allows for systemic implementation of the HSMS.

#### 1. MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Leadership and commitment by senior management provides the vision, establishes policy, sets goals and provides resources to lead and support the implementation of the HSMS.

#### 2. IDENTIFYING HAZARDS & MANAGING RISK

Managing the risks in our workplaces includes identifying hazards, assessing the risks those hazard present, and controlling the risks to an acceptable level to prevent work-related injury and ill health.

#### 3. INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT (IRM) COMMITTEES

IRM Committees assist the organization by bringing together managers and workers to jointly identify and resolve health and safety issues in the workplace. Committee members also participate in the development and implementation of the HSMS.

#### 4. ORIENTATION, TRAINING & COMPETENCE

Everyone in the workplace – from senior management to frontline workers – needs to understand their roles and responsibilities when it comes to safety and health. Senior managers should understand their role in establishing policies and continually driving the HSMS. Employer representatives (management) must ensure that workers are trained, qualified and competent to perform their tasks and respond safely to unexpected changes. Supervisors must provide adequate instructions and oversight to workers so they can perform their work in a safe and healthy manner. Workers need to work safely, monitor their personal health and implement the training they receive.

#### 5. CONTRACTOR & PUBLIC SAFETY

Establishes the requirements City representatives must adhere to when contracting for services and projects – to prevent injury and ill health. These requirements begin prior to the contract

award, extend during the life of the contract and outline the follow up required by the project manager to support the HSMS post completion.

## 6. WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS

Workplace inspections support the continual identification of occupational safety and health risk and prevent the development of unsafe working conditions.

## 7. EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Emergency response planning refers to the methods, techniques, procedures, and actions the City has in place to respond to potential emergencies including building evacuation, shelter in place and active threat.

## 8. REPORTING

HSMS incidents and observations come in many forms, such as: work related injury or ill health, motor vehicle collision, workplace harassment or violence, property damage, safety or security concerns, and near miss reporting. Reporting to the employer as early as possible is crucial to our HSMS. Adjusting reporting workflows to ensure the protection of personal information is mandatory.

## 9. INVESTIGATION

Investigations are always about learning and never for the purpose of shame, blame or the assignment of discipline. HSMS investigations identify the situational hazards, employer system vulnerabilities, and personal conduct vulnerabilities that influenced the occurrence and outcome of the event (positively or negatively). Investigations can be formal or informal.

## 10. PROGRAM METRICS & PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Regularly assessing how well the organization is doing when it comes to meeting our HSMS objectives is essential to improving the overall system. Maintaining and sharing accurate records will provide useful information to support continual improvement.

## 2019-2021 HSMS Objectives

### Prevent

**Focus:** the safety, health and well-being of people is the first consideration of every leader – at every level – every day.

- Tool: provide safety leadership training (supervisor, manager, senior leader)
- Metric: percentage of training completed
- Target: >75% completion rate in each job role category

### Respond

**Focus:** adherence to all minimum legislated requirements with a focus on striving for excellence in all adopted voluntary standards.

- Tool: Health and Safety Management System (HSMS)
- Metric: *Certificate of Recognition* external audit score
- Target: score 85% or higher in the 2021 external audit

### Support

**Focus:** clear communication of the qualifications, training and experience required for each job role across the corporation.

- Tool: identification of mandatory safety and health training/learning by job role
- Metric: percentage of job codes populated in the corporate LMS matrix
- Target: 80% of front-line supervisor and manager job codes, excludes LPS and Fire/EMS

### Enhance

**Focus:** increase adoption of critical safety and health behaviours in individuals and work groups.

- Tool: *My Safety Survey* online safety perception survey
- Metric: percentage of surveys completed (all employees)
- Target: >75% completion rate & establishment of benchmark